

Out of Exile, not out of Babylon

The Diaspora Theology of the Golah



Volker Glissmann

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It is said that a PhD is often a reflection of one's own personality and life situation. This is especially true for the PhD that led to this book. I must clarify from the beginning that I can neither claim to be an exile nor a member of a diaspora community. I am an educational refugee or migrant who left his homeland to study abroad and while 'abroad' as a family, we became members of a community there. Subsequently, it was this community (the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) that asked us to represent them and seconded us to work with their partners in a third country.

Our unique family make-up has played a fundamental role in the initial academic pursuit, as well as being most stimulating intellectually. Our life situation, along with many conversations with friends in similar situations, has offered fruitful opportunities for reflection about the diaspora situation. We are a cross-cultural (German and Korean) and multi-lingual family who lived and studied in a third country for many years (Northern Ireland and shortly Singapore), our children have never really lived in their own parents' home countries; two of them were even born outside of our homelands. Our church has subsequently commissioned and sent us to work on another continent: Africa. We are part of the local community as well as part of the international expatriate community in Zomba, Malawi. Thus, questions of identity, relation to homelands, passing on of traditions, cultural influences, and raising children in a third culture, are all part of the fabric of our family life.

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Abbreviations

ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D.N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York. 1992
ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton. 1969
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</i>
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by W.W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden, 1997-2002

CTN	Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud
CurBS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
DEvD	<i>Die evangelische Diaspora</i>
Diaspora	<i>Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies</i>
DOTP	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch</i> . Edited by T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker. Leicester, 2003
DOTHB	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books</i> . Edited by B. T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson. Leicester, 2005
EncJud	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem, 1972
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
EvT	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
FAT	Forschung zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschung zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HeyJ	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation - A Journal of Bible and Theology</i>
JANER	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEMS	<i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods: Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LTK ³	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche. 11 vols. 3rd ed. Edited by W. Kasper. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1993-2001
NAC	New American Commentary
NDBT	New Dictionary of Biblical Theology. Edited by T.D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner. Leicester, 2000
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Oxford Theological Monographs
OTP	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PRSt	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies

SHJPLI	Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
STAR	Studies in Theology and Religion
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TADAE A	Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt A: Letters</i> . Jerusalem, 1986
TADAE B	Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt B: Contracts</i> . Jerusalem, 1989
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974-2015
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum/Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
ThR	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
ThTo	<i>Theology Today</i>
Transeu	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
UTB	Uni-Taschenbücher
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series
VWGT	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Chapter 1: Introduction

The subject of this study is the Babylonian *golah* community and the way their existence in a foreign land influenced their re-telling of the biblical texts and their theologizing. This book has a twofold interest; firstly, highlighting the *golah* (and diaspora) theology as preserved in the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah and secondly, highlighting the *golah* theology as expressed in the synoptic text of Genesis. The community of the exiled Judahites in Babylon placed great importance on the preservation and reformulation of a number of exilic writings. This points to the vibrance, concern, theological conviction and influence of this Judahite diaspora community. This is a community that has not received its fair share of attention in scholarly circles. The main focus has, naturally, been on Yehud and the post-conflict communities there. However, the importance of the *golah* in relation to some biblical accounts has increasingly become apparent.¹

The two main exilic prophetic/priestly protagonists, Ezekiel and Ezra, are essential cornerstones of the Babylonian *golah*. Ezekiel has been seen as the initial constructor of an exilic theology,² and Ezra is the personification of the pious reformer and Torah student.³ A further important witness to the influence of the *golah* on the mindset of the biblical editors is the vision of the two kinds of figs in Jeremiah 24. The good figs are exclusively preserved in Babylon following the first deportation in 597 BCE. The bad figs are the members of the royal house of Zedekiah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the province of Yehud as well as the diaspora communities in Egypt. This vision highlights the

¹ Jill Middlemas, *The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the 'Exile'* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 141-142; Robert P. Carroll, "Razed Temple and Shattered Vessels: Continuities and Discontinuities in the Discourses of Exile in the Hebrew Bible," *JSOT* 75 (1997): 93-106, esp. 102.

² Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles and Constructor of Exilic Ideology," *HUCA* 76 (2005): 1-45.

³ At least this is how the book of Ezra-Nehemiah reinterprets the historical situation in Yehud during the restoration period.

influence that the *golah* had on some parts of the Hebrew Bible. It also is a witness to a creative theological re-formulation of the existing deuteronomistic exile-theology, in which exile can be salvific if it is in obedience to YHWH and may therefore, not always be a sign of the covenant curses (cf. Deut 28:25, 37).

The Hebrew Bible preserved the theological interpretations of the historical events of the Babylonian campaigns that led to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. In line with a theological and religious mindset, the explanations given for the calamity that befell Judah are not exclusively sought in natural explanations. The religious interpretation is that the people of Judah were punished by YHWH for their covenantal disobedience rather than that the calamity is a result of a Babylonian imperial policy of extension. The deportation in 597 BCE is interpreted as a preservative salvific act of YHWH, not a punishment of the ruling class for their rebellion against Babylonian overlordship. It is not surprising that explanations are sought in the religious realm, as all human experiences are interpreted through one's philosophical, political or religious world view. It is noteworthy that the seemingly historical account is not narrated in a neutral, detached and objective manner in the style of contemporary historical conventions but in the form of a theological interpretation of that historical reality. Two events in relation to the *golah* stand out as theological re-interpretations of historical events: the so-called myth of the empty land and also the *golah*-initiated and *golah*-led return movement following Cyrus' return decree in 538 BCE.⁴

The focus of this study is not to reconstruct the accurate historical situation in Yehud or the diaspora, nor to separate the historical from the theological facts but rather, to present and re-interpret these events as viewed in the *golah*. The books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah are primarily used to engage with *golah* theology but the *golah*-redaction of 2 Kings,

⁴ Caution needs to be applied when the attempt is made to reconstruct the early restoration period in Jerusalem solely on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. For a good discussion of the preference of the Nehemiah accounts over and against Ezra; see Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005).

the work of Deutero-Isaiah (theorised to have lived in Babylon) and the *golah*-redacted books of Ezra and Nehemiah are also consulted.⁵ The *golah* is not a static group. A shift in emphasis, self-description and theology is apparent between Ezekiel and the works of Ezra-Nehemiah.⁶ This shift is most clearly seen in Ezra-Nehemiah's negative/derogative exclusive attitude towards outsiders, which is very different from the inclusive attitude in Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah. For that reason, the emphasis of this book is on early *golah* theology.

Scholarly attention has moved from the exilic period to a new appreciation of the situation in Persian-controlled Yehud. The interest is in Yehud's emerging social, religious and political constitution and how they may have responded to challenges.⁷ Although the new emphasis on life in Yehud must be applauded, this study is not primarily interested in the colonised subjects in Yehud but the colonised subjects in the

⁵ The *golah* redaction of Ezra seems to be a historical reinterpretation of events in Yehud during the post-exilic time, a retelling that favours the *golah* in Babylon and portrays all restoration originating from them. The case of Nehemiah must be clarified by future research as two important elements of the *golah*-redaction are missing: no references to the *golah* (only in a list in Neh 7:6) and no priority of the community in Babylon (Nehemiah is from Susa in Elam). The joining of the two books to create the book Ezra-Nehemiah might potentially be associated with a diaspora (as opposed to a *golah*) redaction. The joined book of Ezra-Nehemiah widens the *golah* horizon to include a wider diaspora in Mesopotamia.

⁶ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 127-151.

⁷ See, for example, Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003); Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006); Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007); Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

Judahite diaspora, especially the Babylonian *golah* community. I welcome the shift of emphasis from the old 'exile-to-homeland' paradigm to a new appreciation of diverse 'Judaisms' but I think that there is still room further to investigate the theological re-formulation that might best be explained as originating not from Yehud but from the Babylonian diaspora. The *golah* originated from the 597 BCE deportation and not exclusively from the later 587 BCE deportation from Jerusalem. Central to the *golah's* self-understanding is the chosenness of the *golah* over and above the remaining population in Yehud and all other diaspora communities. The exclusive chosenness goes hand in hand with a reformulation of the question of the location of the remnant and also a reformulation of the exilic courses.

The shift from Yahwism to Judaism excelled in the Persian period, potentially due to the pressure of foreign domination both in Yehud and also in the diaspora communities. An expression of this change can be seen in the Judahite diaspora in Nippur in Mesopotamia. The Murašû archive in Nippur (mid fifth-century BCE) indicates the change in name-giving patterns in the (at least Nippurian) Judahite diaspora where suddenly, names with a non-Yahwistic foreign theophoric element disappear completely.⁸ This does not mean that all names contain the characteristic theophoric Yahwistic element, rather, all non-Yahwistic foreign religious elements disappear. The changes are a witness to a religious or cultural re-orientation and a change of self-definition over and against other displaced diaspora communities inside the Persian-controlled empire. The proximity of Nippur to Babylon, rather than Yehud, paired with the biblical recording in Ezra-Nehemiah of the return of diaspora-Judahites to Yehud with a similar naming pattern, indicates a religious-cultural re-orientation within the Babylonian diaspora community.

The renewed interest in the Persian period has led to a new emphasis in interpreting the book of Genesis. These recent interpretations examine the book from its historical background with regard to life in Persian period Yehud, or to the exiles, or the Babylonian *golah* community on

⁸ See Klaus Bringmann, *Geschichte der Juden im Altertum: vom babylonischen Exil bis zur arabischen Eroberung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005), 21-22.

the brink of return to Yehud, or the *golah* in post-exilic Yehud, or the diaspora communities both in Mesopotamia and Egypt and their challenge to return to the land of their fathers.⁹ These interpretations share as their starting point the centrality of the land. However, a synchronic reading of Genesis in its current canonical form does not support such an interpretation. It is argued that Abraham's call from Ur contains the return motif, not for the initial exiles but for the later

⁹ Two recent commentaries interpret Genesis primarily in light of the exiles: Clare Amos, *The Book of Genesis* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004) and James McKeown, *Genesis* (Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008). See also Alastair G Hunter, "Father Abraham: a Structural and Theological Study of the Yahwist's Presentation of the Abraham Material," *JOT* 35 (1986): 3-27; Thomas C. Römer, "Genèse 15 et les tensions de la communauté juive postexilique dans le cycle d'Abraham," *Transeu* 7 (1994): 107-121; Robert P. Carroll, "Exile! What Exile? Deportation and the Discourse of Diaspora," in *Leading Captivity Captive* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 278 / ESHM 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 62-79, esp. 63; Niels Peter Lemche, *Prelude to Israel's Past* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998), 223-225; Mark G. Brett, *Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000); Thomas C. Römer, "Recherches actuelles sur le cycle d'Abraham," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2001), 179-211; Albert de Pury, "Situer le cycle de Jacob quelques réflexions, vingt-cinq ans plus tard," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2001), 213-241; Jean-Louis Ska, "Essai sur la nature et la signification du cycle d'Abraham (Gn 11,27-25,11)," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2001), 153-177; Albert de Pury, "Le tombeau des Abrahamides d'Hebron et sa fonction au début de l'époque perse," *Transeu* 30 (2005): 183-184; Albert de Pury, "The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 51-72; Gerhard Langer, "'Exil und Diaspora als Movens jüdischer Identität': Der Befund des Pentateuch," in *Diaspora - Exil als Krisenerfahrung: Jüdische Bilanzen und Perspektiven* (ed. Armin Eidherr, et al.; Klagenfurt: Drava-Verlag, 2006), 15-35; Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Abraham - A Judahite Prerogative," *ZAW* 120, no. 1 (2008): 49-66.

generation who were born in a foreign land and had never been in Yehud.¹⁰ The return motif is also identified in Jacob's return journey from Paddan-aram to Canaan. Other aspects of Jacob's travel are not taken into account; as he does not continuously settle in the land but leaves again for good. Such an interpretation, where the patriarchal character reflects a type of Israel in exile, fits well when only *parts* of the patriarchal tradition are interpreted. The narrative cycles of both Jacob and Abraham contain continued leaving motifs (as opposed to return motifs). Ultimately, Abraham will settle and die in Canaan but Jacob dies in a foreign land. The presence of the patriarchal family in Egypt, settled in the land, without receiving a call to return, even after the famine is long over, questions the interpretations exclusively based on the return motif.

The narratives of Ezra-Nehemiah contain repeated diaspora homeland missions in order to influence the religious outlook of Yehud.¹¹ These missions extend to a period of more than 100 years after Cyrus' return decree, indicating that in the diaspora the return motif was not as prominent and not as important and pressing an issue as often assumed.¹² This study attempts to highlight the voice of the community that holds such a view – the *golah* community in Babylon. Being aware that it cannot be assumed that there is only one *golah* community with one theological outlook, this study will focus on the group that is assumed to be responsible for the final redaction (the joining of JE with P) of the

¹⁰ In this study I will use, for the sake of clarity, the name Abraham when referring both to Abram and Abraham and the name Sarah when referring both to Sarai and Sarah.

¹¹ Peter Ross Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations in Ezra-Nehemiah," VT 52, no. 2 (2002): 147-165.

¹² Shemaryahu Talmon, "'Exile' and 'Restoration' in the conceptual World of ancient Judaism," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 107-146, esp. 110.

text of Genesis.¹³ This study does not propose that a diaspora perspective is the only valid one but rather wants to supplement the existing interpretations with the so far undertheorised *golah*-perspective.¹⁴

Clearly there are problems in reconstructing the *golah* and other Judahite (but also Israelite or other ethnic) diasporas in antiquity since resource material for a study of this subject is not easily accessible. These diaspora communities often remain invisible in their place of settlement, are rarely the subject of an extensive treatment in their own right by the classical sources of the period and their own voices are unrecorded. Archaeological evidence for the presence of diaspora communities exists but is very limited, which makes it difficult to trace a community over time. This would be an endeavour fruitful in helping us understand the internal developments and especially the levels of interaction, contact, acculturation, assimilation and development of a diaspora bi-culturalism. However, this information is not available. Overall, even onomastic identification remains problematic when no further ethnic clarification is given (which is usual). Further difficulties arise in that onomastic evidence points in a different direction to the ethnic qualifier. Is the giving of a Babylonian name by a Judahite father in the

¹³ With 'final' redaction I am referring to a redaction that linked together the JE and P source, leaving open the possibility of minor 'post-final' redactional changes.

¹⁴ A similar view is expressed by Gerhard Langer, who asks the important question: 'Warum bemüht sich der biblische Text in seiner Endredaktion so stark, uns vor dem Exodus mehrfach ein positives Bild von Ägypten und seinen Herrschern zu zeigen? Bedeutet uns diese Geschichte nicht deutlich, dass es nicht genügt, die Trennlinie zwischen Diaspora und gelobtem Land zu ziehen, sondern vielmehr beide Perspektiven für sich gelten zu lassen?' ['Why does the biblical text, in its final redaction, try so hard to present a positive image of Egypt and its rulers multiple times before the exodus? Does this not clearly show, that it is not enough to draw a diving line between diaspora and the promised land, but rather to let both perspectives count?'] See Gerhard Langer, "Exil und Diaspora als Movens jüdischer Identität," 22.

diaspora a sign of assimilation or ‘Babylonisation’?¹⁵ A further problem exists in the question of assessing the impact of living as a minority in a culturally different setting. Caution needs to be applied before generalising statements can be made about the situation of diaspora communities in antiquity. The diaspora situation might stretch linguistic terminology or the parameters of terms like acculturalisation and assimilation and their overall assessment.

In order to establish the characteristics of a diaspora community in antiquity, this study will first draw on contemporary sociological/anthropological diaspora research and also investigate what is known about the Judahite Mesopotamian diaspora in the Babylonian and Persian periods (chapter 2). This is followed by a discussion of the theological re-formulations associated with the *golah*, namely the empty-land motif, the return from exile, the *golah* influence on the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (chapter 3). This is followed by my own reconstruction of the *golah* community and its primary outlook and a discussion about the relation between the *golah* and the theology of exile and the view of the *golah* on restoration (chapter 4). Chapter 5 will look at possible links between the Babylonian *golah* and Genesis and highlight the theological similarities between the *golah* mindset and Genesis as regards: a belief in monotheism, a faith that was inclusive rather than nationalistic and exclusive, an outlook that was non-political, a belief that YHWH presence is not geographically limited. Finally, an anthropological theory of diaspora characteristics will be traced throughout Genesis.

1.1. Research Context

The exile as a subject of inquiry has received ongoing and prominent attention since the publication of *Exile and Restoration* by Peter R. Ackroyd in 1968.¹⁶ Ackroyd’s contribution, besides raising the issue, was

¹⁵ For a discussion of a similar problem, see also Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 723-725, 893.

¹⁶ For details, see the bibliography at the end of this study.

to highlight the 'creative' re-interpretations of the exilic situation of different biblical writers, especially in the light of a restoration theology. He closely links the historical experiences in Judah of 587 BCE with the exilic theologizing reformulation and, in doing so, limits his work to an interpretation of history that excludes both the captives in Babylon and the Judahite population that fled to other regions. Until now, the motif of restoration has been taken to be *the* defining thought of the exilic and post-exilic community, yet at the same time, it is recognized that in Second Temple literature the exile is presented as an ongoing or unending exile.¹⁷

Recent scholarship has raised some doubts about the centrality of the exilic experience in the reconstruction and the development of biblical literature. Not all scholars are convinced that the concept of exile is as foundational as previously thought in the biblical literature and in its reconstruction.¹⁸ This kind of probing into the historical reliability of the exile makes good use of the emerging archaeological, epigraphic and iconographic evidence, paired with extended settlement surveys of demographic fluctuations in Palestine. Special attention is naturally given to Yehud but these surveys also include and compare the surrounding territories. Christoph Uehlinger asks the following question about the archaeological evidence and the results of the surveys:

Do they confirm our biblical view that exile was indeed the fundamental period marker of Palestine's, or for that matter, Yehud's history between the 6th and 4th century? To put it shortly, while archaeology unquestionably witnesses an important crash in the material culture of the coastal plain of Palestine, and a considerable economic recession in the central highlands, it

¹⁷ Robert Carroll simply called the Hebrew Bible 'the book of exile' and then continues it 'is the great metanarrative of deportation, exile and potential return.' See Robert P. Carroll, "Deportation and Diasporic Discourses in the Prophetic Literature," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 63-85, esp. 64.

¹⁸ See, for example, the articles in Lester L. Grabbe, ed., *Leading Captivity Captive* (JSOTSUp 278; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

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cannot support the idea of a general exile nor mass return. 'Exile' and 'return' were essential coordinates for a minority group.¹⁹

It can be argued for Yehud that the impact of the exile was not as fundamental and widespread as the biblical literature conveys. However, in the Babylonian *golah*, exile remained the founding myth of the community. Ezra contains the story of the Babylonian *golah* re-introducing Yahwism and re-inaugurating some biblical writings back into the province of Yehud. These writings share the theological outlook of sin, deportation, return and restoration and are, as Lester L. Grabbe rightfully concludes, theologically and ideologically motivated reconstructions.²⁰ The preservation and appreciation of such a theology hints at a literary and theologizing group among the *golah* community.²¹

The impact of exile, therefore, must be surveyed in relation to Judahite diaspora communities beyond the homeland.²² The *golah*-favouring redactions (not a general diaspora-favouring redaction) of Jeremiah

¹⁹ Christoph Uehlinger, "'Powerful Persianisms' in Glyptic Iconography of Persian Period Palestine," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 134-182, esp. 135.

²⁰ Lester L. Grabbe, "Israel's Historical Reality after the Exile," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 9-32, esp. 31.

²¹ For a discussion of exile and 'partial relief from exile,' see Harm van Grol, "'Indeed, Servants We Are': Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9 and 2 Chronicles 12 Compared," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 209-227, esp. 222.

²² Jewish writings through the centuries are full of the notion of exile and displacement, a reflection of the state of exile of the Jewish nation following the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans and the expulsion of the people from their homeland. After 70 AD the Jewish nation primarily existed in the state of diaspora as return to the homeland was not an option. In the late Second Temple Period (after the fall of the Persian Empire), the situation was different in so far as people could potentially return to the homeland but chose not to.

further limit the literary exilic production to the descendants of the 597 *golah* community in Babylonia (excluding especially the diaspora in Egypt and those who remained in Yehud). In his survey of religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian periods, Ephraim Stern found a poly-Yahwistic form of religion present in Judah in the Assyrian period. A very different situation emerges for the later parts of the Persian period, which indicates a religious change towards monotheistic Yahwism. Stern attributes this change to the returnees from the Babylonian diaspora because of the 'complete absence of sanctuaries and, even more significantly, the complete absence of these common cultic figurines' among Yehudians and Samaritans.²³ The exile did have a tremendous impact but primarily on those who were exiled. One could argue that the expulsion from their ancestral homeland and the breakdown of government and temple prompted a religious reform and a reappreciation of the biblical texts in light of the diaspora's experience.

The first Assyrian deportations in 733 BCE mark the beginning, as far the current archaeological findings can verify, of Israelite/Judahite communities beyond their homeland in antiquity. Thus far, no earlier trading communities have been identified.²⁴ Future research might be able to show how varying self-understandings and identities develop in these diaspora communities according to the political tolerance available to them. The Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Persian/ Achaemenid periods are all marked by a tolerant attitude to minority groups in the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual empires of Babylon and Persia. The situation changes for the especially well-documented Jewish

²³ Ephraim Stern, "Religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian Periods," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 245-255, esp. 255.

²⁴ The term antiquity is not a very helpful concept here, as there are, for the study of Jewish diaspora, at least five formative and influential periods, which makes the label 'antiquity' rather obscure. The periods are roughly: the Neo-Assyrian period (10th – 7th century BCE), the Neo-Babylonian period (7th – 6th century BCE), the Persian/Achaemenid period (6th – 4th century), the Hellenistic period (4th – 1st century BCE) which includes the Maccabean/Hasmonean Period (165 -63 BCE) and the Roman period (1st century BCE – 4th century CE).

diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. For this study, an important distinction must be made between the pre-Hellenistic and the Greco-Roman periods.

Currently, two great reforms of Judaism are dated in the Persian period. These are the final redaction of the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic redaction.²⁵ For both overarching constructs there is an ongoing discussion about the localization of its composition and redaction. For the Deuteronomistic History (DH), the principal reason given for a redaction in Palestine is that the redaction of such a historiography would require access to a number of different manuscripts and it is easier to imagine that this access happened in the homeland as opposed to distant Babylon. However, this view is more and more contested. Thomas C. Römer and Albert de Pury argue that many texts of the Deuteronomistic History expose an exilic viewpoint. For example, Solomon's prayer of temple dedication in 1 Kgs 8:33-53 stresses the temple as the direction in which to pray (v.30). It also envisions the presence of prisoners of war in foreign lands and also the return of these captives.²⁶

The Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic redaction can be interpreted as responding to the dichotomy between actual religious practice in Yehud and the diaspora and the prescribed forms of Mosaic Yahwism. The cataclysmic event that brought about such a radical re-thinking of previous understandings was the devastating disruption brought about by the exile. This displacement and dislocation forced a reconceptualisation of the prevailing attitudes and assumptions, as the familiar was

²⁵ For a discussion of the relationship between the Deuteronomistic History and the exile, see Thomas C. Römer and Albert De Pury, "Deuteronomistic Historiography (DH): History of Research and Debated Issues," in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert De Pury, et al.; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 24-141.

²⁶ See Thomas C. Römer and Albert De Pury, "Deuteronomistic Historiography," 106 where they also find 'pro-golah ideology' in 2 Kgs 25:21-26. Also Ernest Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), 116-135.

replaced by the unknown. Established behavioural modes in relation to family and clan, provincial authorities and royal administration, the interaction with priests and prophets, responsibility towards the temple and the dependability of YHWH himself were all destroyed. All of this is true for those who remained in Yehud but much more so for those who were exiled or who fled, either to Babylon or any other location.

Traditionally, the Torah and Yehud are linked to Ezra, who is said to have brought the law of Moses back from Babylon when he returned to Jerusalem. The reading of the Torah by Ezra in Nehemiah 8 is taken as an indication that a hitherto, in Yehud, unknown literary corpus was brought back from Babylon and was installed in the province by Ezra (cf. Ezra 7:14).²⁷ Such a scenario suggests that a redaction of biblical material might be associated with the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel or an Ezekielian school in Babylon that influenced Ezra.²⁸ The book of Ezekiel locates both the prophet and his audience in exile in Babylon. The first part of the book (Ezekiel 1-33:20) recalls or imagines a rhetorical situation prior to the fall of Jerusalem and its message is primarily of doom. The second part (Ezek 33:21-48:35) is more hopeful (except Ezekiel 34-36) and its rhetorical situation is located in Babylonian captivity.

Diaspora will increasingly become a subject that needs to be addressed and studied in relation to the redaction of the biblical texts and also in relation to our knowledge of the Persian period. Recent discussion has focused on the question of how to understand the references to the empty-land and subsequently to the people who remained in Yehud. This study aims to balance and supplement the Yehudian perspective with the perspective of the *golah*/diaspora community in Babylon. Drawing together some loose ends of the current discussion, this study attempts to shed light on the question of how diaspora existence could have influenced the final redaction of the book of Genesis. This is a study not only of the reality that Judahite diaspora communities existed

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1989), 152-157.

²⁸ See Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Facing Destruction and Exile: Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," *ZAW* 117, no. 2 (2005): 189-205 or Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles."

beyond the homeland and might have influenced a theologizing of their future restoration and return but also of the direct influences of the *golah* on the reformulation, preservation and theologizing of the biblical texts.

The evidence that the *golah* community left a mark on biblical literature is especially prominent in relation to the restoration period in Yehud. Most of the studies addressing the *golah* investigate the situation of the *golah* returnees vis-à-vis the non-exiled population of Yehud.²⁹ Some studies address the situation of the *golah* in Babylon, with a consideration of its economic condition, its legal status and its internal organisation.³⁰ Daniel L. Smith-Christopher uses contemporary experiences of deportation to understand the situation faced by the exiles in Babylon and their coping mechanisms in order to maintain a social and group identity.³¹ John J. Ahn draws on sociological research on forced migrations, migration and regional economic developments, studies of internally displaced persons and refugee studies and investigates their impact on Yehud and on selected biblical texts.³² Surprisingly, no further research has been done that builds on insights from sociological/anthropological diaspora research, so this study is aiming to fill this gap.

²⁹ For a clear and recent summary of studies addressing the *golah* in one way or the other; see John Kessler, "Persia's Loyal Yahwists: Power Identity and Ethnicity in Achaemenid Yehud," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 91-121, esp. 97-98.

³⁰ Bustenay Oded, "Observations on the Israelite/Judaeen Exiles in Mesopotamia during the Eighth-Sixth centuries BCE," in *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski* (ed. K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), p. 205-212.

³¹ See Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: A Sociology of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington, Ind.: Meyer-Stone Books, 1989) or Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002). Daniel Smith publishes now as Daniel L. Smith-Christopher.

³² John J. Ahn, "Exile, Literature and Theology: The Literary and Socio-Theological Impact of the Forced Migrations of the Southern Kingdom of Judah" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2006).

The textual witness, though in the form of a theological self-description, in the *golah*-favouring works of Ezra-Nehemiah portrays the *golah* as continuously involved in providing leadership, obtaining favours from the central government and giving instructions in religious and cultural matters for the people of the province of Yehud.³³ To what degree this self-description is historically accurate needs to be clarified by further research. The problems in the historical reconstruction of these *golah* missions are apparent, the main ones being the uncertainty of the internal chronology and the inter-relationship between Ezra's and Nehemiah's ministry. Putting the historical problems aside for a moment, the books of Ezra-Nehemiah in their present form are nevertheless pointers to the theological bias of their (late) *golah*-redactor. We infer from the text that the Babylonian *golah* community understood itself as the only custodian of true Yahwism and initiated a series of homeland missions to influence Yehud's religious outlook.³⁴

1.2. Methodology

This study addresses the issue from three different angles: anthropological, archaeological and biblical. In order to trace features of exile or diaspora in Genesis, there is an analysis of contemporary anthropological research into diaspora groupings. Unfortunately, the theorising academic work on the nature of exile is very limited, so that no overarching theories could be assessed for this work. The nature of exile, with its individual colouring and the contemporary understanding that a variety of reasons leads people to seek refuge among other societies, complicates any attempt to generalise anthropological findings. For these reasons, anthropological studies form the basic theoretical

³³ See especially the narrativial reconstruction of the diaspora missions to influence the homeland as argued for by Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 151-159.

³⁴ Ezra-Nehemiah contains, at least on a narratological level, a Persian imperial authorization. For a good summary and discussion of this theory, see the articles in James W. Watts, ed., *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* (SBLSymS 17; Atlanta: SBL, 2001).

groundwork for understanding diaspora communities in a foreign land. This avoids any speculative use of hypothetical scholarly reconstructions.

Contemporary anthropological research is limited to the creation of models, the assessment of cultural phenomena and to the understanding of the personal and communal experiences in antiquity. Research into diaspora communities in pre-Hellenistic antiquity is in itself limited due to the scarcity of available suitable information about the continuous settlement of communities, their social interaction amongst themselves and with neighbouring communities or individuals, their relationship to their original homeland and their size and internal composition. Most evidence derives from a few individuals whose social position enabled the documentation of their interaction with people of a different ethnic background, as business or marriage partners, or simply as witnesses to contracts. Overall, the lives of lower-class farmers and workers remains unrecorded. Some gaps in our knowledge can be filled by insights from the field of diaspora studies. Diaspora studies enable to us to make judgments based on comparatively well-researched contemporary communities. This enhances the overall understanding of living and interacting in a diaspora situation. Not all contemporary diaspora research is well suited to shedding light on antiquity as it presupposes modern transport and communication technology for the maintenance of the diaspora-homeland paradigm.³⁵

In terms of biblical exegesis, the method chosen for this research is a synchronic reading of Genesis. The decision to opt for a synchronic reading, which does not investigate the theology of the different sources behind the text of Genesis, is primarily linked to the scholarly assumption that the two main sources of Genesis (JE and P) were joined as a result of the exile. There is also a growing uncertainty, among some scholars, about source critical divisions and developments that differ sharply from Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis. One further difficulty is the uncertainty in establishing the concrete order and chronological development of the theological mindset inside the Babylonian *golah* and diaspora community. It is likely that different 'schools' in the

³⁵ For a full discussion see 2.4.1. of this study.

Babylonian *golah* had different and competing theologies.³⁶ Thus, one of the aims of this study is to extract the basic and widely shared, theological mindset inside the *golah*. This is done through a comparison of *golah*-favouring passages with the book of Genesis.

Archaeological findings from the Mesopotamian and Egyptian diaspora are also consulted in order to help to reconstruct the nature of these diaspora communities. This ensures an accurate picture of their settlement structure, their religious outlook (as far as it is reconstructable) and their interaction with Yehud and with other communities. Important pieces of evidence are extracted from the exilic prophetic works of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, which address the *golah* or the diaspora in one way or another. Such an investigation cannot be concluded without answering the question of whether Yehud and more specifically Jerusalem, can only be seen as the centre of literary production for that period.

This study looks at the prospect that one or more members of the Babylonian *golah* community influenced the final redaction of the book of Genesis. Its theological outlook is distilled from the *golah*-favouring passages in Ezekiel and Jeremiah (aided by insights from 2 Kings, Deutero-Isaiah,³⁷ and Ezra-Nehemiah). This study examines the following four areas: a) a belief in monotheism, b) a faith that was inclusive rather than nationalistic and exclusive, c) an outlook that was non-political, d) a belief that YHWH presence is not geographically limited.³⁸ Finally, anthropological diaspora characteristics are explored in Genesis,

³⁶ Norbert Lohfink, "Was there a Deuteronomistic Movement?" in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 36-66, esp. 62-63.

³⁷ Deutero-Isaiah reflects later exilic (or post-exilic) developments. See also Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 317.

³⁸ A potential further expression of the *golah*-theology could be a theology that views 'Israel' as a primarily confessional entity or a theology that maintains the complete restoration of a 12-tribe Israel.

in order to establish the wider (non-theological) diaspora influence (e.g. return motif).

There are several considerations underlying this study. Firstly, there is a strong presence of an explicit '*golah*-theology' and 'diaspora-theology' in the prime exilic works of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann identified for both books redactional layers that establish the exclusive chosenness and preservation of the 597 *golah* over against the diaspora communities in Egypt and especially those who stayed behind. The book of Jeremiah goes through a further redaction that widens the focus to include not only the 597 *golah* but the wider diaspora. Secondly, there is the move away from the hermeneutical lens of exile to a more appropriate understanding of the Babylonian diaspora as a diaspora community that shaped the outlook of the Hebrew Bible. Thirdly, there is a shift from the experience of the first-generation exiles to the different experience of the second and third generation diaspora.³⁹

1.3. The Use of Scholarly Conventions

The period under consideration in this study makes categorising and naming of both people and their religious beliefs extremely difficult, especially when considering the descendants of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms in their various diaspora manifestations.

Yahwism(s)

Yahwism as used in this study is not Mosaic Yahwism, not even exclusive monotheistic Yahwism but is rather applied to describe the various religious/cultural expressions that centre on YHWH. This is similar to John Kessler's use of 'Yahwistic community or Yahwistic shareholders,' by which he means a broad grouping of individuals connected in some

³⁹ See Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat: Religionswissenschaftliche Analyse zu Diaspora am Beispiel von Hindus auf Trinidad* (Marburg: diagonal-Verlag, 2003), 299. See also John J. Ahn, "Exile, Literature and Theology", esp. chs. 2-3 for further sociological literature on the difference between 1.5 and Second (and subsequent) generations of exiles.

form or other to YHWH and/or Jerusalem with its newly dedicated temple.⁴⁰

Yehud and Judah

The Aramaic term Yehud refers to the Persian province of Judah under colonial rule, whether Babylonian or Persian. Judah refers to the general territory or province in the time before the Babylonians.

Golah

Golah is used in this study to refer primarily to the Judahite diaspora community in the Babylon region from 597 BCE onwards and to those groups who adhere to their general theological outlook, be it in Babylon, in other parts of the diaspora, or in the group of returnees to Yehud.

Exilic and post-exilic

This study uses the distinction between exilic and post-exilic in the way in which they are normally used in Biblical Studies. 'Exilic' refers, in relation to Judah, to the period from 597 BCE to 515 BCE. 'Post-exilic' will refer to the period after 515 BCE. Even so, this study argues that the return from Babylonian captivity, in the way the *golah* understood it, is *not* considered to be the end of exile.

⁴⁰ John Kessler, "Persia's Loyal Yahwists," 96.

Chapter 2:

Definition and Evidence of Diaspora in Antiquity

2.1. Introduction

The first step in determining the outlook of the Babylonian *golah* community, is to draw on the use of sociological/anthropological studies of diaspora communities, either in antiquity or, where appropriate, in contemporary settings. This will ground all following discussions of the nature of diaspora communities in historically researched precedents and thus limit the speculative use of assumption about life in a diaspora situation. These findings are for the purpose of discovering similarities and differences between the historically researched diaspora and the reconstructed Babylonian *golah*. This chapter will address three key areas. Following a discussion of the terms *Exile* and *Diaspora*, there will be a survey of the field of sociological/anthropological diaspora studies. This is followed by an assessment of definitions that are based on diaspora characteristics in antiquity and are built on a Jewish 'ideal type' diaspora. Thirdly the most useful of these characteristics will be collected to form a comprehensive list of diaspora characteristics with the aim of creating a definition of diaspora in antiquity.

2.2. On the Usefulness of the Terms *Exile* and *Diaspora*

The general popularity of the term *exile* in modern and post-modern literature and discourses has not led to a clarification of its meaning but rather the opposite. The term *exile* is also widely used in Biblical Studies, unfortunately often in a non-specific and under-theorised way. Peter I. Rose points to the 'untheorized' use of the terms *exile* and *refugee*. Even in sociological/anthropological circles, he attributes this to the fact that

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both terms carry 'the single notion of coercion.'¹ This is also reflected in the definition Paul Tabori suggests: an exile is 'a person who is compelled to leave his homeland.'² Nevertheless, Tabori maintains that there is essentially no difference between an exile who was compelled by force to leave and an exile who left voluntarily. In his view deportation and banishment result generally in the same state of displacement. Against this Edward Said reemphasizes the 'classical' notion that, exile originates in the age-old practice of banishment.³ In Said's opinion, the word 'refugee' is a modern construct that suggests large groups of vulnerable and dependent people who require immediate international help. On the other hand, expatriates live voluntarily in another country, usually for personal or social reasons. Émigré, technically, is the term for a person who emigrates to a new country. Said would argue that 'exile' always carries the notion of involuntary banishment. It also requires the explicit prohibition of return through the threat of imprisonment or death. Important features in shaping our modern understanding of exile are the rise of national states resulting in ethnic space and the willingness or unwillingness of states to receive and welcome those fleeing persecution, reducing the amount of human suffering. These opinions already highlight the tension that exists between those involved in the exilic discourses. Thus, more and more people and groupings willingly use the exilic label as a self-description and thus the term finds wider use beyond its initial core use of banishment.

The question needs to be asked whether *exile* as a changing term best describes the variant exilic experiences of the people of Judah. *Exile* as a categorising feature may be best applied to those who personally experienced the deportation. Both Tabori and Said seem to suggest that the exilic experience is intrinsically limited to the first generation of exiles who experienced actual physical and psychological uprooting. Partly for the second, but more so for the third generation, *diaspora* as

¹ Peter I. Rose, "Forced Out," in *The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile* (ed. Peter I. Rose; Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 1-6, esp. 3.

² Paul Tabori, *The Anatomy of Exile: a Semantic and Historical Study* (London: Harrap, 1972), 37.

³ Edward W. Said, "Reflections on Exile," *Granta* 13 (1984): 159-172, esp. 166.

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a concept better describes their experience. These generations lacked the actual experience and pain of the deportation and grew up in place they call home. Exile can be defined as an individual fate,⁴ yet in the case of Judah, the experience was collective. The lack of enthusiasm to return to the ancestral land indicates a break in the longing for the homeland. The longing for the ancestral home was complicated by the reality that their place of birth was home. A surprising development took place, a theologizing developed that did not require a homeland. It seems that the exilic experience established once and for all that the centre of the diaspora had become the temple as opposed to a national state and that the return and restoration are historically located in the future ('next year in Jerusalem').⁵ These developments reflect the mind-set of a diaspora rather than the actual exiles.

The word διασπορά (*diaspora*) comes from the Greek *speiro* (to sow) and *dia* (through, across). The Greeks used it to describe migration and colonization, though the word is primarily used in Hellenistic Jewish literature.⁶ Originally, *diaspeirein* was used for the scattering of seeds which would, through this disruptive but natural process, reproduce. Historically, diaspora describes the dispersion or the scattering of pockets of Jewish population beyond Israel-Palestine. The origin of the term goes back to the LXX translation of Deut 28:25, ἔσῃ ἐν διασπορᾷ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς, (*esē en diaspora en pasais tais basileiais tēs gēs*) which is translated into English as 'you shall be a diaspora (or dispersion) in all the kingdoms of the earth.'⁷ It must be pointed out that

⁴ Paul Tabori, *The Anatomy of Exile*, 27, 33.

⁵ It is widely noted that the Sephardim, after their expulsion from Toledo in Moorish Spain in 1492, kept the keys to their Spanish homes; and their longing was both for Spain and for Jerusalem. It should not be overlooked that Nehemiah himself, after his second term, returned to the Persian court (Neh 13:6) and never returned to Jerusalem.

⁶ Aiyenakun P. J. Arowele, "Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament: Studies on the Idea of Christian Sojourn, Pilgrimage and Dispersion according to the New Testament" (PhD. diss., Bayrische Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, 1977), 27.

⁷ The LXX translates the Hebrew term *hr*;[*z'*] (*zaavah*) neutrally as 'dispersion;' modern translations (ESV, NIV, NASV) translate it negatively as 'you shall be a

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the term διασπορά (*diaspora*) is *not* a translation of hlwg (*golah*) and twlg (*galut*)⁸ rather, it already expresses a theological re-interpretation by the LXX *translators* of the harsh judgment of exile into the general notion of 'being scattered.'⁹ This shift away from the 'curse of exile' to the 'milder' scattering is often attributed to Hellenistic optimism.¹⁰ This study will alternatively highlight the contributions of the exilic *golah*-prophets and their reformulation of this curse concept into a necessary preparation for the Yahwistic repopulation of Yehud, offering an alternative reason for the change in terminology.

Diaspora defines itself as a minority community surrounded by and interacting (not necessarily in exclusive segregation) with the majority population. It is a community whose centre of identity is located beyond the borders of its host nation. In contemporary sociological/ anthropological discussions *diaspora* is used as the opposite of *exile* and forced displacement, either as a positive or at least as a neutral phenomenon.¹¹

horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.' A potential further re-interpretation of this concept can be seen in the *golah*-favouring re-interpretation of this horror concept in Jer 24:9, where those once threatened to be a horror are not simply those exiled but everyone except the 597 *golah*. See 3.4. of this study for a full discussion.

⁸ hlwg (*golah*) and twlg (*galut*) primarily describe the Babylonian captivity, see Aiyenakun P. J. Arowele, "Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament", 46.

⁹ See Reinhold Bohlen, "Diaspora." *LTK*³ 3:199-201; Aiyenakun P. J. Arowele, "Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament", 5; Hermann-Josef Röhrig, "Diaspora in römisch-katholischer Sicht," *DEvD* 62 (1993): 81-100, esp. 82; Daniele Garrone, "Diasporaerfahrungen im Alten Testament: 'Wie begegnet uns die Diaspora im Alten Testament?'" *DEvD* 63 (1994): 111-125, esp. 112; René Krüger, "Das biblische Paradigma der Diaspora. Die solidarische und missionarische Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen," *DEvD* 63 (1994): 87-109, esp. 99-101. For a similar conclusion, see Joseph Méléze-Modrzejewski, "How to be a Jew in Hellenistic Egypt?," in *Diasporas in Antiquity* (ed. Shaye J.D. Cohen and Ernest S. Frerichs; BJS 288; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 65-91, esp. 65-71.

¹⁰ For literature, see Aiyenakun P. J. Arowele, "Diaspora-Concept in the New Testament", 6-10.

¹¹ In Biblical Studies *diaspora* and *exile* are often and unfortunately understood to describe the same negative exilic situation. See also James M.

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Unfortunately, the term *diaspora*, although widely used in Biblical Studies, is frequently used in a non-specific way.¹² It generally denotes a single diaspora – in fact *the* Diaspora - as if there had been one unified, centralized unit whose participants all shared the same experience. The term *diaspora* in its current academic use still awaits a conclusive universal definition.¹³ The term is widely used and its proto-typical meaning denotes a group of people who live in a land that either they or their relatives have migrated to, in a place where they differ culturally or religiously from the majority population.¹⁴ At the same time these diasporas maintain a 'doubled relationship or dual loyalty' both to their current home and to their ancestral home.¹⁵ *Diaspora* in its original meaning refers to the Jewish Diaspora forced out of their homeland. In recent years other displaced people, who have a strong collective identity, use the term *diaspora* to describe their group, even though the

Scott, "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 173-218, esp. 184.

¹² Robin Cohen begins his anthropological introductory work on global diasporas with the notion that diaspora is, 'often used casually, in an untheorized or undertheorized way.' See Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: UCL Press, 1997), x.

¹³ Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan, and Carolin Alfonso, "Introduction to Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research," in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research* (ed. Waltraud Kokot, et al.; London: Routledge, 2004), 1-8, esp. 3. See also, Hans van Amersfoort, "Gabriel Sheffer and the Diaspora Experience," *Diaspora* 13, no. 2/3 (2004): 359-374, esp. 360.

¹⁴ Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat*, 16.

¹⁵ Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg, "Introduction to Displacement, Diaspora and Geography of Identity," in *Displacement, Diaspora and Geography of Identity* (ed. Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg; Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 1-25, esp. 14.

classical features of diaspora, colonization and persecution are missing.¹⁶

2.3. Anthropological Diaspora Studies

This section surveys the academic field of diaspora studies, the anthropological shift from exile to diaspora, the prominence of homeland and lastly the use of diaspora in biblical scholarship.

In western scholarship the Jewish diaspora was taken to be the paradigm, with the Armenian and Greek dispersions as the two other noteworthy examples of diaspora. The term *diaspora* as it is used in contemporary anthropological studies has experienced a loosening of the definition since the 1960s.¹⁷ Prior to 1968 the term *diaspora* was always understood in relation to the nation-state (which was the ideal model of national identity) but since then diaspora has begun to be understood as an alternative form of national existence. One of the questions facing diaspora studies today is whether the term itself should be defined by the historical experience of the Jewish diaspora as the normative model or if a definition of diasporic communities should be coming out of scientific socio- or anthropological research of current existing diaspora communities.¹⁸ The use and meaning of the term *diaspora* can change over time. 'The question is whether the change helps to clarify historic evolutions or whether its uncontrolled application ends up grouping together under a single term phenomena with different significance or

¹⁶ For an introduction to the issues arising out of the diaspora thematic, see for example *Diaspora: A Journal for Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (1991) or *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 28, no. 3 (1999).

¹⁷ See Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," *Diaspora* 5, no. 1 (1996): 3-36. His periodisation is widely accepted, see for example, Dominique Schnapper, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World: On the Meaning and Usefulness of Diaspora as a Concept," *Diaspora* 8, no. 3 (1999): 225-254, esp. 226.

¹⁸ See also Matthias Krings, "Diaspora: historische Erfahrung oder wissenschaftliches Konzept?," *Paideuma* 49 (2003): 137-156.

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meanings.¹⁹ Those who argue that the term 'diaspora' is conditioned by its historical precedent of trauma and exile also argue for a limited application to newer diaspora groups.²⁰ For others, diaspora is simply the outcome of internal or cross-border migration.²¹

Since the use of the term *diaspora* has changed considerably since 1968, there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of the term for this study.²² Khachig Tölölyan describes *diaspora* as a 'synonym for related phenomena until recently covered by distinct terms like expatriate,

¹⁹ Dominique Schnapper, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World," 249.

²⁰ Cf. Robin Cohen, "The Diaspora of a Diaspora: The Case of the Caribbean," *Social Science Information* 31, no. 1 (1992): 159-169, esp. 159-160; William Safran, "Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas," in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research* (ed. Waltraud Kokot, et al.; London: Routledge, 2004), 9-29. See also Dominique Schnapper, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World," 249 who argues for the traditional meaning of diaspora and prefers the historical definition based on issues of institutionalisation and ambition for unity in the diaspora and some form of return aspiration, even if it is an imaginary one.

²¹ For such an alternative definition, see Latha Varadarajan, "Out of Place: Rethinking Diaspora and Empire," *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 36, no. 2 (2007): 77-103, esp. 80.

²² The Oxford English Dictionary traces the first citation of the term *diaspora* in the English language only to the year 1876.

Religious tradition played till recently only a minor role in the studies of diaspora communities (see Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat*, 23). In the mid-1990s a new 'field' of enquiry developed in the area of study of religion/comparative religion which Seán McLoughlin terms 'diaspora religion.' It involves a study of migration, identity and religion. For a good introduction, see Seán McLoughlin, "Migration, Diaspora and Transnationalism," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (ed. John R. Hinnells; London: Routledge, 2005), 526-549; Martin Baumann, "Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison," *Numen* 47, no. 3 (2000): 313-337, esp. 323-324.

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exile, ethnic, minority, refugee, migrant, sojourner and overseas community.²³ In popular usage *diaspora* is often used for a scattering away from a centre and a clear linguistic or anthropological division does not take place. Tölölyan notes that diaspora 'shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community.'²⁴ This makes an accurate definition difficult as these terminologies overlap. Thus, the word *diaspora* comprises a wide semantic range and cannot be narrowed down to one specific type of experience.

James Clifford observes that the term *diaspora* itself is 'traveling or hybridizing in new global conditions.'²⁵ The modern anthropological meaning and definition of *diaspora* has adapted and still is adapting to the changes produced by an ever-changing global village, differing migration patterns and a change of easily accessible and cheap global communication. In postmodern circles the term *diaspora* is used in reference to 'double consciousness,' 'dwelling-in-displacement' or 'multi-locationality' within and across territorial, cultural and psychic boundaries.²⁶ The distinct nuance of the postmodern use of *diaspora* is the moving away from characteristics of dispersion, ethnicity and an

²³ Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora(s)," 10.

²⁴ Khachig Tölölyan, "The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface," *Diaspora* 1, no. 1 (1991): 3-7, esp. 4.

²⁵ James Clifford, "Diasporas," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the late twentieth Century* (London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 244-277, esp. 249.

²⁶ For further references to these concepts, see Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat*, 18; James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 302-338, esp. 307-328. An interesting observation was recently made by Colm Tóibín, who remarks on issues of postmodern dual identities and issues, that might have been influenced by the Irish diaspora and are now appreciated in Ireland itself. He states, 'what works wonders now in Ireland is not the bomb or the bullet, but two humble and ancient objects: the hyphen and the word "and." Thus Samuel Beckett can be Hiberno-French; and David Trimble can be Northern Irish and British; and I can be Irish and a citizen of the European Union.' See Colm Tóibín, "What Does It Mean to Be Irish?," *Newsweek* CLIII, No. 13, no. March 30 (2009): 38.

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original centre/homeland. Floya Anthias provides a good definition of this understanding of *diaspora* as:

a *condition* rather than being descriptive of a group... this version of diaspora denotes a *process* at the holistic level and not just in terms of the group or intergroup relations; the diaspora process is organically related to globalisation and cultural mixing (or syncretism/hybridity).²⁷

The widening of the postmodern definition of diaspora results in the inclusion of an ever-increasing number of alienated groups and individuals, even sub-cultures, often as the result of imperialism, slavery or some other traumatic experience.²⁸

Diaspora Studies are currently facing the danger of rendering the category of diaspora useless.²⁹ Rogers Brubaker, in his recent summary survey on developments in diaspora studies, points out that the term diaspora itself is applied to an ever increasing number of groupings and this subsequently waters down the definition of diaspora.³⁰ Noteworthy is that even if the term *diaspora* is applied to an increasing amount of groupings, rarely does any study discuss whether such an application is appropriate. The general understanding of diaspora rests on a popular notion of dispersion, alienation and living in a foreign environment.³¹ Brubaker continues then to point to three core elements or criteria which 'remain widely understood to be constitutive of diaspora.'³² The three core criteria are: dispersion, homeland orientation and boundary-maintenance. Dispersion includes forced or voluntary migration across a state border. Homeland orientation can be to a real or imagined

²⁷ Floya Anthias, "Evaluating 'Diaspora': Beyond Ethnicity?" *Sociology* 32, no. 3 (1998): 557-580, esp. 565-566.

²⁸ William Safran, "Recent French Conceptualizations of Diaspora," *Diaspora* 2, no. 3 (2003): 437-441, esp. 438.

²⁹ See also Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora(s)," 8.

³⁰ Rogers Brubaker, "The 'diaspora' diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 1-19, esp. 3.

³¹ Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat*, 15.

³² Rogers Brubaker, "The 'diaspora' diaspora," 5.

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homeland as source of value, identity and loyalty. Boundary-maintenance involves the preservation of a separate character and identity that differs from that of the host society. This characteristic must also be traceable over an extended period of time.³³ That the initial migrant preserves his distinct identity is expected. The proof of a diaspora lies in the question to what degree the second, third and subsequent generations maintain these boundaries. The three core elements which Brubaker has identified make up the essential starting point for an understanding of the term and the concept of diaspora.

2.3.1. *Homeland of Imagination*

To qualify as a diaspora, migrant communities need to be established over an extended period of multiple generations. This raises the question of the relationship between the diaspora community and the original homeland, notably where the diaspora has no physical connection to the homeland – there are no travel and homeland visits. In a discussion about the Indian diaspora in South-Africa, Thomas B. Hansen made the following important point that can help in an understanding of the relationship between ancestral homeland and the diaspora: ‘An “India” of the imagination is a more effective touchstone of authenticity than the physical realities of the Republic of India.’³⁴ Hansen describes the diasporic reality of creating a homeland of imagination that can function as the overarching identity-giver without being a physical reality and without demanding real sacrifice or compromise in return. This is similar to a point Dibyesh Anand made about returning, it ‘is more about “return,” a repeated turning to the concept and/or reality of the homeland,

³³ Rogers Brubaker, "The 'diaspora' diaspora," 6-7. See also Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," *Diaspora* 10, no. 2 (2001): 189-219, esp. 192.

³⁴ Thomas Blom Hansen, "Response," *Himal Southasien* 16, no. 10 (2003), n.a. [accessed 24.04.2018]. Online: <http://old.himalmag.com/component/content/article/1886-comments-from-the-readers.html>.

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than a physical return.³⁵ In traditional Jewish texts the mythical Zion is 'the eternal Jewish home.'³⁶ It is the place one longs for without inheriting it; it is the place to which the Messiah will lead the Jews on his return. This homeland of imagination is also in the truest sense the mythical homeland where paradise is restored and dislocation and exile will come to an end. Caryn Aviv and David Shneer attribute the 'dynamic tension between movement and rootedness, between being at home and recalling a mythic homeland' to the counsel Jeremiah gave in Jer 29:5-7:³⁷

Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

It might also be asked if humans can have more than one homeland, a primary one (Yehud) and a secondary one (diaspora),³⁸ or two equal homelands. Paul Gilroy suggested a 'double consciousness' of two

³⁵ Dibyesh Anand, "A Contemporary Story of 'Diaspora': the Tibetan Version," *Diaspora* 12, no. 2 (2003): 211-229, esp. 214.

³⁶ Caryn Aviv and David Shneer, *New Jews: the End of the Jewish Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 3. Homeland is not just a fixed historical concept but one that, even from a nation-state perspective, can be quite flexible. National borders change over centuries and with it the homeland territory. Settlers (like the Afrikaners or Quebecois) move to new places and establish new homelands. See also Walker Conner, "The Impact of Homelands upon Diasporas," in *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (ed. Gabriel Sheffer; London: Croom Helm, 1986), 16-46, esp. 18.

³⁷ Caryn Aviv and David Shneer, *New Jews: the End of the Jewish Diaspora*, 4.

³⁸ For a discussion on this point in relation to Philo, see Sarah Pearce, "Jerusalem as 'Mother-City' in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria," in *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire* (ed. John M. G. Barclay; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 19-36, esp. 23-31.

homelands.³⁹ Or, does one need a homeland at all? Sometimes it is suggested that the Jews have a portative homeland – the Torah, something that developed especially after 70 C.E. and 135 C.E.⁴⁰

2.3.2. Anthropological Shift from Exile to Diaspora

Exile feels like exile as long as a return is not possible but the possibility of return questions this physiological paradigm. Amanda Wise, in her study of the East Timorese exilic experience, witnessed the events leading up to East Timor's independence in 2002 and furthermore was able to observe the psychological changes that took place in the exiled community in Australia after their return suddenly became a possibility.⁴¹ She witnessed the change of attitude from wanting to return to the realisation that Australia had already become their home.⁴² This was especially true for the first wave of refugees and the children of most of the exiles. Her study is especially important for the study of the Jewish experience in antiquity, as the dislocated East Timorese came, mostly, from rural backgrounds. Much of the exilic literature comes from intellectual and artistic circles, whose experience is not always shared by the

³⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993). For a concept of double references as not being a new discovery, see Dominique Schnapper, "From the Nation-State to the Transnational World," 230.

⁴⁰ An expression coined by the Jewish poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856). Jean-Louis Ska, "From History Writing to Library Building: The End of History and the Birth of the Book," in *The Pentateuch as Torah* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 145-169, esp. 157-158.

⁴¹ Amanda Wise, *Exile and Return Among the East Timorese* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) especially chapter 6 'From Exile to Diaspora? On Identity, Belonging, and the (Im)Possibility of Return Home.'

⁴² For a similar study that led to the same results, see Susanne Schwalgin, "Why Locality Matters: Diaspora Consciousness and Sedentariness in the Armenian Diaspora in Greece," in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research* (ed. Waltraud Kokot, et al.; London: Routledge, 2004), 72-92, esp. 82.

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common people. She summarises the plight of the exiled community as follows:

Questions of home, exile, and belonging became central for former East Timorese exiles following East Timor's independence. Now they had to decide whether to return to East Timor or remain in Australia. After the painful initial flight, possibly the greatest challenge for all exiles comes when it is finally safe to return to the homeland. For some, the final realization that they have grown accustomed to the new country is as painful as the initial exile, for these people can never *really* go home. There is, then, a fundamental ambivalence at the center of the post-exile experience. This increased engagement in process of translocality reflects a fundamental shift, not from exile to home, but from exile to *diaspora*.⁴³

A similar observation arises out of Tabori's extended studies on exilic experiences, 'while the exile may leave with the full determination to return, this resolve is likely to weaken and fade in direct proportion to the length of his absence. It is only exceptionally that it survives more than one generation.'⁴⁴ With special regards to those who grow up in 'exile,' Marcela Cornejo concludes in her research:

For second-generation narrators, exile always seems to constitute an obstacle, for, as children, their parents' exile imposed exile on them too. However, their stories show that this obstacle was not really perceived as such, because for them living elsewhere than in their parents' country of origin was a 'natural' fact in their lives: they had lived there almost always and therefore it was part of their existence. For them, exile entailed the looming possibility of returning to Chile, which their parents always

⁴³ Amanda Wise, *Exile and Return Among the East Timorese*, 165 (emphasis original).

⁴⁴ Paul Tabori, *The Anatomy of Exile*, 38. A similar shift in self-understanding is noticeable in the relation to Jewry and more specifically to Israeli migrants who will not describe themselves as exiles, see Steven J. Gold, *The Israeli Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2002); Gabriel Sheffer, "Is the Jewish Diaspora Unique?," in *Contemporary Jewries: Convergence and Divergence* (ed. Eliezer Ben-Rafael, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 23-44, esp. 26-27.

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longed for. Returning was an obstacle that left them living in suspense and uncertainty, torn between two worlds.⁴⁵

The possibility of return marks a fundamental shift in the self-understanding and identity of the exiled community as each family must reassess its options and ultimately its wish to return. During the exile dreams and hopes are projected onto the homeland but after the return becomes a theoretical possibility the feasibility of such an endeavour must be confronted, especially after the place of exile little by little was turned into a more home-like place. The exilic experience centres on the notion of 'return' in a theoretical and fictitious way, in an understanding of where the past and the future are reconfigured to be one reality. But the possibility of return calls for an assessment of reality. Literature of refugees and exiles and their hopes for return often focuses on the 'post-exilic experience' of deciding to return and on the actual return; nevertheless, the decision *not* to return is also a common and well-attested aspect of the exilic reality. This last feature, not so well established in the biblical literature, is foundational for the emergence of the Judahite diaspora in and after the Persian period.

The shift from exilic to post-exilic/diasporic existence, which is marked by the choice of not returning to the ancestral homeland, creates a new 'home' which still clings to the 'symbolic importance of the desire to return.'⁴⁶ The shift from desiring physical return to statements of deferral ('one day in the future') is best understood in light of the complex co-relationship between feelings of guilt, obligation, identity, duty and the need to feed one's family. Diasporic Judaism cultivated the notion of 'next year in Jerusalem' which can be paralleled by the delay of possession of the 'Promised Land' in the time of the patriarchs throughout the book of Genesis. This shift in self-assessment of the exiled community is highlighted by Wise's findings in relation to the East Timorese in Australia: 'At the beginning of my research, every East

⁴⁵ Marcela Cornejo, "Political Exile and the Construction of Identity: A Life Stories Approach," *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 18, no. 4 (2008): 333–348, esp. 341.

⁴⁶ Amanda Wise, *Exile and Return Among the East Timorese*, 186.

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Timorese said they would go back. Three years after the 1999 referendum about half said they would eventually return, while others made deferral statements.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, the decision for not returning should never be interpreted as a break with one's homeland, race or identity but rather as the birth of a new transnational and translocal community that faces peculiar challenges to balance assimilation and their own cultural and religious distinctiveness, the reality of interrelationship conflicts between people groups and the representation of this new community and its relation to the original homeland.⁴⁸

There are multiple reasons why people do not return from exile; the lack of economic possibility is by and large the most devastating of these reasons, as a desire for return is harboured but the economic means do not allow the realisation of this dream. Some people do not want to return because they have become economically successful, others because there are still more opportunities in the host nation than in the mostly devastated and underdeveloped home country. Roger Zettler's study of Greek-Cypriot refugees comes to the same conclusion as Wise that the economically underprivileged are the most unlikely returnees (especially if they come from a rural background and their agricultural land has been dispossessed) and also those most traumatised by the whole exilic experience.⁴⁹ These findings support the biblical accounts of the early restoration period that describe a large number of Judahites returning to Yehud. This could only have happened under an imperial initiated return decree.

⁴⁷ Amanda Wise, *Exile and Return Among the East Timorese*, 192.

⁴⁸ Transnationism roughly describes and highlights the interconnectivity between people across state borders and the resulting loosening of ideas of citizenship and nation. Translocalism describes the same in relation to regions in a state.

⁴⁹ See Roger Zetter, "The Greek-Cypriot Refugees: Perceptions of Return Under Conditions of Protracted Exile," *International Migration Review* 28, no. 2 (1994): 307-322, esp. 319.

2.3.3. Biblical Scholarship and Diaspora

Biblical Scholarship in its variety of disciplines uses the term *diaspora* frequently, unfortunately in an under-theorized way.⁵⁰ The concept of diaspora is regularly used and even originated in the religious discourse of the Hebrew Bible, yet little theoretical work has been done to understand, describe and appreciate the concept of diaspora. Baumann, interested in the theoretical discourse, surveyed biblical and theological literature in Jewish and Christian studies. He concludes that *diaspora* is 'historically descriptive, often supplemented by some theological and pastoral interpretations.' He continues by adding, 'indeed, most scholars in Judaic and Christian theological studies have not even noticed the present popularity and wide usage of the term outside their disciplines.'⁵¹

Modern social sciences rely heavily on biblical scholarship in their quest for the historical meaning of the term *diaspora* in its initial Jewish context. Unfortunately, *diaspora* is consistently viewed in its religio-historical setting in antiquity as a negative concept in direct contrast to its modern, balanced or even positive use.⁵² Many attempts to theorize the term *diaspora* work on the assumption that nowadays *diaspora* has a positive connotation, which contrasts with its supposed negative association in the history of the Jewish people.⁵³ Diaspora as a concept is

⁵⁰ A similar criticism is voiced for the social sciences by Floya Anthias, "Evaluating 'Diaspora': Beyond Ethnicity?," 557, also Robin Cohen, "The Diaspora of a Diaspora: The Case of the Caribbean," 159-169. For a good summary and introduction to the approaches of postcolonial studies to the Hebrew Bible; see Bradley L. Crowell, "Postcolonial Studies and the Hebrew Bible," *CBR* 7, no. 2 (2009): 217-244.

⁵¹ Martin Baumann, "Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison," 320.

⁵² Ruth Mayer, *Diaspora: eine kritische Begriffsbestimmung* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2005), 9.

⁵³ This can be seen in Denise Helly's attempt to outline the attitude towards diaspora in antiquity. She subdivides antiquity into the period of Greek colonization (positive) and the period of the Jewish translation of the Septuagint (negative). She continues then by saying: 'this definition changed as

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widely used in the study of the Greco-Roman period as it helps to shed light on Judaism in the Second Temple period. A re-assessment of the Jewish negative conceptional use of diaspora in antiquity has been undertaken and can be analysed in recent publications which have studied Jewish diaspora communities in and around the Mediterranean world.⁵⁴ These re-assessments highlight the fact that diaspora in Jewish antiquity was not understood as exclusively negative.

Jews settled freely outside Palestine and diaspora came to mean the gathering of all Jews by the will of God . . . by the third century BCE, the term had shed its negative connotation and designated Jews living in the Greco-Roman world and speaking Greek, as well as the Jews living in Mesopotamia and speaking Aramaic.' The next period deals again with the Jewish nation after the destruction of the Second Temple, and the connotation of the resulting diaspora was again negative, 'although this meaning waned during the centuries to follow.' See Denise Helly, "Diaspora: History of an Idea," in *Muslim Diaspora: Gender, Culture and Identity* (ed. Haideh Moghissi; New York: Routledge, 2006), 3-22, esp. 3.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Shemaryahu Talmon, ed., *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (JSPSup 10; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Shaye J.D. Cohen and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., *Diasporas in Antiquity* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998); Margaret H. Williams, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish identity in Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999); Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); John M. G. Barclay, ed., *Negotiating Diaspora: Jewish Strategies in the Roman Empire* (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Martin Goodman, "Jews and Judaism in the Mediterranean Diaspora in the Late-Roman Period: The Limitations of Evidence," in *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (ed. Carol Bakchos; JSJSup 95, ed. Hellenistic Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, and Roman Periods: Supplement Series 95; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 177-203.

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In post-colonial studies some attempts are made by the Cuban-American Fernando Segovia, who suggests 'a hermeneutics of diaspora, a hermeneutics of otherness and engagement' to develop the concept of diaspora as part of a post-colonial, voices-from-the-margin, reading of the text.⁵⁵ Another scholar who discusses the usefulness of the concept of diaspora on a theoretical basis in a postcolonial setting is R. S. Sugirtharajah, who argues that diaspora is 'about the ambivalences and contradictions of being at home in many places.'⁵⁶ Smith-Christopher suggests that a cultural exegesis of the biblical text can provide new insights, even 'new possibilities for *historical* meaning.'⁵⁷ This kind of approach can be seen in an essay by the Cuban-American Ada Maria Isais-Diaz, who reflects on her own exile and dislocation from Cuba in light of the

⁵⁵ See for example, Fernando F. Segovia, "Towards a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora: A Hermeneutics of Otherness and Engagement," in *Reading from this Place 1: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert; Minneapolis, Mass.: Fortress Press, 1995), 57-73. Also Fernando F. Segovia, *Interpreting beyond Borders* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). A summary of Segovia's thinking and an exemplary use of his hermeneutics can also be found in Luis R. Rivera-Rodríguez, "Reading in Spanish from the Diaspora through Hispanic Eyes," *ThTo* 54, no. 1 (1998): 480-490. Another illustration with an explanation of a postcolonial reading; see Jean-Pierre Ruiz, "An Exile's Baggage: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of Ezekiel," in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period* (ed. Jon L. Berquist; SemeiaSt 50; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 117-135. R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3, provides the following definition, 'postcolonialism allows silenced and often marginalized people to find their own voices when they are at loggerheads with the dominant readings.'

⁵⁶ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 184.

⁵⁷ Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Introduction to Text & Experience: towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible," in *Text & Experience: towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible* (ed. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 11-22, esp. 17.

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words and experiences of Psalm 137.⁵⁸ Another example is the interesting essay by the Hong Kong scholar C.C. Archie Lee, who reflects on exile and return in the light of Hong Kong ceasing to be a British colony. He uses the experience of the people of Hong Kong to shed light on the struggles of the exiles and their response to the invitation to return to Jerusalem.⁵⁹ The strength of cultural exegesis is that it can potentially offer new insights on or new emphases in the text. This is especially true for approaches that adopt a reading from the margin, a non-territorial reading, as many biblical scholars have not shared in these kinds of experiences.⁶⁰

Diaspora as a discourse in biblical scholarship is not limited to postmodern interpretation but also finds its place in Biblical Studies. As well as studies that address aspects of the *golah* or the exilic prophets, Robert P. Carroll suggested a diaspora discourse in the prophetic texts, the book of the Twelve and in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.⁶¹ Carroll's choice of a 'diaspora discourse' is surprising as he does not provide a distinction between exile and diaspora but uses the terms interchangeably. In his article he highlights diasporic identity markers in ideas of destruction, deportation, exile, or restoration. A theoretical explanation of his choice of terminology is expressed in a later article, where he argues that:

⁵⁸ Ada Maria Isai-Diaz, "'By the Rivers of Babylon': Exile as a Way of Life," in *Reading from this Place 1: Social location and Biblical interpretation in the United States* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert; Minneapolis, Mass.: Fortress Press, 1995), 149-163.

⁵⁹ Archie C.C. Lee, "Exile and Return in the Perspective of 1997," in *Reading from this Place 2: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert; Minneapolis, Mass.: Fortress Press, 1995), 97-108, esp. 98.

⁶⁰ See also Bradley L. Crowell, "Postcolonial Studies and the Hebrew Bible," 238. One other aspect of a post-colonial reading examines the question of the presentation of empires by the author and his/her attitude towards legitimisation or resistance to the empire; see David A. DeSilva, "Using the Master's Tools to Shore Up Another's House: A Postcolonial Analysis of 4 Maccabees," *JBL* 126, no. 1 (2007): 99-127.

⁶¹ Robert P. Carroll, "Deportation and Diasporic Discourses," 66.

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from the position of modern readers of the Bible there can really only be a sense of exile as something propounded by a Jerusalem- or Palestinian-orientated point of view. From a Babylonian Jewish community, an Egyptian Jewish community or even a modern reader's point of view, life in the diaspora may not have been seen as exilic at all. It is all a question of point of view and perspective.⁶²

Carroll's observations open the doors for further investigations into the living situation and, ultimately, the theologizing of the diaspora apart from a Yehud-centred and land-centred theology. Contemporary research into exilic experiences witnesses a distinct shift in self-understanding between first and third generation exiles. Thus far these insights are not widely enough appreciated with regard to the exilic period and the *golah* community in Babylon. A diaspora-centred view looks different from a Yehud-centred view in the sense that the lack of physical experience of Yehud prompted a look at the 'homeland-province' in a different way - not through the lens of exile but through the lens of a place of origin of cultural and religious significance. Overall, Carroll's statement also points to the under-theorized use of the term *diaspora* in biblical scholarship, which is what this study aims to address.⁶³

2.4. Towards a Definition of Diaspora in Antiquity

In order to arrive at a definition of *diaspora*, in light of the recent development in diasporic studies, an analysis of sociological and anthropo-

⁶² Robert P. Carroll, "Exile! What Exile?," 67.

⁶³ In German theological discourses *diaspora* is also used to refer to confessional enclaves surrounded by a majority denomination. This happened as a consequence of the Reformation(s) and the Counter-Reformation (or Catholic Reformation) which left pockets of either Protestant or Roman Catholic minorities living in denominational different dominated countries. Also Martin Baumann, "Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison," 320.

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logical findings relating to diasporas must be undertaken. Specific attention will be paid to anthropological definitions which have the Jewish experience as their main subject matter.

To arrive at a justifiable definition of a diaspora in antiquity, caution must be exercised in the use and re-use of current diaspora (e.g. post-modern) discourses for Biblical Studies. Modern/post-colonial definitions of diaspora tend to be, in Sugirtharajah's view, about ambivalence, contradictions, references to multiple-homes and multiple-people.⁶⁴ Post-colonialism applies a critical perspective to colonial/power discourses and favours the indigenous over the colonial, the powerless over the powerful. It has to be noted that in the social sciences a change in wording occurred in the post-colonial discourses. The term *diaspora* is now the preferred concept in cultural studies and the social sciences, replacing post-colonial identities.⁶⁵ The problem of multiple conflicting definitions of diaspora, presents one major obstacle that needs to be addressed when using a diasporic discourse in Biblical Studies.⁶⁶

Over different historical periods the understanding and assessment of *diaspora* has changed considerably. Renewed interest in diaspora communities in antiquity highlights the realisation that diasporas were not exclusively viewed as negative but that public perception altered with the expansion and idealisation of the nation state in the modern period.⁶⁷ The first important point in understanding current academic discussion is to notice the change of meaning from negative (in relation to the nation-state) up to the 1970s to positive from the 1980s onwards.⁶⁸ The picture that emerges for the self-connotation of Jewish

⁶⁴ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* 184.

⁶⁵ Ruth Mayer, *Diaspora*, 7.

⁶⁶ Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 1-22, 4.

⁶⁷ Denise Helly, "Diaspora: History of an Idea," 3.

⁶⁸ Denise Helly, "Diaspora: History of an Idea," 4-5, 8-9; Michele Reis, "Theorizing Diaspora: Perspectives on 'Classical' and 'Contemporary' Diaspora," *International Migration* 42, no. 2 (2004): 41-60, esp. 43-44.

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diasporas in antiquity provides a rather puzzling picture of competing and opposing understandings of and verdicts on diaspora. What materializes is that room must be made, especially in the historical Jewish context in antiquity, for the notion that the diaspora experiences and discourses were not simply negative or positive but changing and complex.⁶⁹

The theoretical foundation/definition of the term *diaspora* is conditioned by the historical experience of the Jewish people in antiquity.⁷⁰ The initial meaning of the term *diaspora* includes references to dispersion and homeland but it is best to use the term in its historical conditioning, as a basis for the definition.

2.4.1. Caution about the Application of Diaspora Theories

Some caution needs to be exercised when applying modern concepts derived from the study of contemporary diasporas to diaspora communities in antiquity. A special feature of the biblical narratives is that they are tangible stories and not abstract philosophical theories,⁷¹ which makes the application of anthropological findings to the biblical narrative rather difficult to prove. However, it must be recognized that the difficulty does not indicate a flaw in the anthropological theory but rather, a problem of bridging the gap between the ancient narrative and contemporary research.

There are a number of fundamental differences. Modern communication technology (international newspapers, telephones and internet) enables a diaspora to be informed about the political, cultural, religious, sports and family events almost in real time. The manifold uses of the internet bridge the gap between homeland and host society because it allows for both passive and active participation. The internet provides

⁶⁹ Denise Helly, "Diaspora: History of an Idea," 14.

⁷⁰ Similarly Ruth Mayer, *Diaspora*, 21. Contra Brian Keith Axel, "The Context of Diaspora," *Cultural Anthropology* 19, no. 1 (2004): 26-60.

⁷¹ Shemaryahu Talmon, 'Exil' und 'Rückkehr' in der Ideenwelt des biblischen Israel (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1992), 65.

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countless points of contact between diaspora and homeland, via for example, social networks, blogs, online newspapers, file sharing of music, speeches or videos. The diaspora can campaign, support or blog/write about or on behalf of the homeland (or a political party, be it the ruling one or the opposition) and may provide immediate financial support for projects back home. The internet also aids the diaspora in connecting its local, regional or internal scattered members, thereby strengthening cultural belonging. The cyberspace thus enables an immediate, active participation in the home society. A further important aspect is the availability of quick, regular and reasonably affordable international flights which provide the possibility of regular visits, even pilgrimages, which strengthen belonging. These flight connections also provide the security that the other homeland is only a couple of hours' flight away. Further to this is the popularity and wide spread use of the term diaspora in the popular media which further provides for contemporary diaspora a justification for dual-belonging and involvement and a positive and affirmative self-image. All of these points are without a matching reference in antiquity. Travel is the only documented aspect but it was not widely available for the regular (non-merchant, non-aristocratic) population. Any attempt to use contemporary diaspora experience to shed light on antiquity must take into consideration the fundamental differences that exist between them.

The same caution must be exercised when contemporary diaspora experience is compared to a literary work. Every diaspora definition that is applied to the book of Genesis has to take account of the fundamental disparity between traceable features of modern-day diasporas and dimensions and features of diasporic experience in a narrative more than two millennia old. The problem of tracing features of diaspora centres on the nature and history of the editorial history of Genesis, which is non-autobiographical and/or non-diasporic literature (diasporic literature being literature where aspects of diaspora are essential to the story told in the narrative). Because of this, some diasporic features will be difficult, or only artificially, traceable. Genesis' narrational characters do not live in a diaspora community (which is one of the features of diaspora) nor do they live for a long period, or even permanently, beyond the homeland (which is another important feature of diaspora).

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Another problem arises when modern sociological terminology is used to describe the conceptual world of antiquity. Nation/Nationality and religion are the terms, in this research which call for some clarification with regard to their use in antiquity, as both are naturally prominent in the discussion of Judahite diaspora communities. Steve Mason concludes in his research into the terminology for Jews and Judaism in the Graeco-Roman period that they, 'were understood until late antiquity as an ethnic group comparable to other ethnic groups, with their distinctive laws, traditions, customs and God. They were indeed Judeans.'⁷² For the period under consideration, it implies that there is no Judaism to be studied, in the sense of an all-encompassing religious or ideological framework based on the religion of the Judeans. Even the question of whether there were competing Judaisms along clear distinguishable lines must be clarified by future research and whether followers of a competing religious interpretation were automatically excluded from being part of the national-religious ethnos. Jeremiah's prophecy about the good and bad figs (Jeremiah 24) maintains that both groups are fundamentally of the same kind (e.g. figs). Mason also notes that religion as a concept distinct from ethnic or cultural criteria does not exist.⁷³

2.4.2. Towards a Working Definition of Diaspora in Antiquity

This section will assess the characteristics of the definition of *diaspora* of both William Safran and Robin Cohen in order to find a working definition of *diaspora* for this study.⁷⁴ Both definitions of diaspora do

⁷² Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38, no. 5 (2007): 457-512, esp. 457.

⁷³ Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism," 480.

⁷⁴ For a lengthy comprehensive universal 'operational' definition, see Gabriel Sheffer, ed., *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 8-9. Or Gabriel Sheffer, "Is the Jewish Diaspora Unique?," 23-44. Sheffer's 'general profile or ethnonational diasporas' (p. 24) is based on a contemporary rather than a historical analysis. His profile varies in respect to

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not deal explicitly with the historical situation of the Jewish diaspora in antiquity and for this reason, modification is necessary.⁷⁵ Both definitions distil the Jewish diaspora experience into a theoretical model without addressing the question of whether an individual needs to adhere to some, or all, forms of religious, cultural, or religious-cultural aspects of Judaism in order to qualify for membership in the Jewish diaspora.⁷⁶

2.4.3. Assessment of Safran's Definition

Early research in contemporary diaspora studies tried to formulate characteristics of diasporic experience, modelled after the experience of the longest surviving diaspora – the Jewish one. Noteworthy here are, first of all, Safran, who saw the Jewish diaspora experience as the 'ideal type' and tried to formulate six characteristics of 'expatriate minority communities' based on the Jewish historical experience.⁷⁷ James Clifford points out the hesitation that (perhaps) Safran expresses, by the

considering the ancestral home as the true ideal home and with regard to the return movement. See also his recent suggestion to use a collective profile of diaspora rather than a definition, see Gabriel Sheffer, "A Nation and Its Diaspora: A Re-examination of Israeli-Jewish Diaspora Relations," *Diaspora* 11, no. 3 (2002): 331-358, esp. 333-334. For a modern period definition see for example, Valery A. Tishkov, "The Diaspora as a Historical Phenomenon" 41, no. 1 (2002): 54-88, esp. 65.

⁷⁵ For an appreciation and use of Cohen's definition see the published *Habilitationsschrift* by Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat*, 28, 71; also Ruth Mayer, *Diaspora*, 13; Andreas Ackermann, "A Double Minority: Notes on the Emerging Yezidi Diaspora" in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research* (ed. Waltraud Kokot, et al.; London: Routledge, 2004), 156-169, esp. 162.

⁷⁶ William Safran lists ten characteristics for the individual member of the diaspora. He also asks the unavoidable question how many of these characteristics an individual needs to fulfil in order to qualify to be diaspora. See William Safran, "Comparing Diasporas: A Review Essay," *Diaspora* 8, no. 3 (1999): 255-291, esp. 257.

⁷⁷ See also, William Safran, "Deconstructing and Comparing Diasporas," 10.

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single quotation marks around the concept of 'ideal type.' He wonders if Safran was using the idea with caution so as not to limit his definition only to the Jewish case.⁷⁸ Safran summarises the problem of defining diaspora and the relation to the Jewish experience well when he says:

... through the ages, *the Diaspora* had a very specific meaning: the exile for the Jews from their historic homeland and their dispersion throughout many lands, signifying as well the oppression and moral degradation implied by that dispersion. But a unique phenomenon is not very useful for social scientists attempting to make generalizations. Today, "diaspora" and, more specifically, "diaspora communities" seem increasingly to be used as a metaphoric designation for several categories of people – expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court*...⁷⁹

Safran then continues to provide a definition of *diaspora* that can be applied to expatriate minority communities who share a number of the following characteristics:⁸⁰

- i) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "centre" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions;
- ii) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements;

⁷⁸ James Clifford, "Diasporas (in *Cultural Anthropology*)," 305.

⁷⁹ William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myth of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora* 1, no. 1 (1991): 83-99, esp. 83.

⁸⁰ William Safran is not dogmatic about the use of his six categories, as can be seen in his discussion of the return movement, which can be either a physical return or an eschatological concept. See William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 94. Khachig Tölölyan characterises the Jewish-centred definition of diaspora (the one now 'displaced' by other definitions but valid from the second century BCE until 1968), as containing six points: coercion, cultural identity, collective memory, patrol of communal boundaries, communication between different diaspora centres, and contact with the homeland. For more details, see Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking Diaspora(s)," 12-15.

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iii) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;

iv) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true ideal home and the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;

v) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and

vi) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.⁸¹

Safran establishes a list of contemporary diasporic communities, compares them to the Jewish diaspora and concludes that, 'none of them fully conforms to the "ideal type" of the Jewish Diaspora.'⁸² In his defence it should be noted that Safran himself questioned the usefulness of a historically unique phenomenon for generalisation and extracting a universal definition from it.⁸³ Yet the concept (and the term itself) of *diaspora* is intrinsically linked to the Jewish experience and for this reason Safran reserves prominence for it. The issue is whether all six of his diaspora characteristics occurred through 2500 years of Jewish diasporic existence, not only once as the product of a historical epoch but as part of a continuous Jewish experience.⁸⁴

⁸¹ William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 83-84. For a slightly different definition of seven points, see William Safran, "The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective," *Israel Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005): 36-60, esp. 37.

⁸² William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," 84.

⁸³ For a criticism of the last three points of Safran's definition as reflecting only certain Jewish (Zionistic) groups in the 20th century, see Jon Stratton, "(Dis)placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora," *Diaspora* 6, no. 3 (1997): 301-329, esp. 307.

⁸⁴ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, 24. For a helpful introduction to the Jewish diasporic experience over the last centuries, see

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The return movement to the homeland (no. iv of Safran) is especially problematic. It requires a widespread return ideology that leads to the complete migration of the diaspora to the homeland under appropriate conditions. The presence of such a physical return movement will ultimately terminate the whole idea of a diaspora in a foreign land, as every member of the diaspora will actively attempt to return to the homeland. The logic of such a return movement would, for our time and age, suggest that the Armenian diaspora in the USA should have vanished by now as all its members would have returned to the original homeland; something that is simply not observable. In a later article Safran outlines the different meanings of return that he studied:

(1) instrumental: that is, an active attempt to return as soon as possible; (2) millennial: a return "at the end of days"; and (3) intermediate: that is, living in exile, but constantly thinking of the homeland.⁸⁵

The broadening of the definition to account for different levels of homeland-return philosophy answers some of his critics' comments with regard to his ahistorical reading of Jewish history. The phrase 'when conditions are appropriate' includes both active and postponing statements of returning, as it is impossible for any outsider to judge when the conditions for an individual family are right. The difficulty with Safran's enhanced return meaning is that the 'intermediate return' describes the exilic first-generation situation and not the diaspora situation of subsequent generation. His 'millennial return' is actually no return at all; it is only a statement of a future intention to return. In fact it is nothing more than a connector to the place of origin. Since the publication of James Clifford's article in 1994, the characteristic of an

here especially his first chapter, 'Classical notions of diaspora: transcending the Jewish tradition.' See also James Clifford, "Diasporas (in *Cultural Anthropology*)," 305. A similar point is made by Haggai Ram, "Between Homeland and Exile: Iranian Jewry in Zionist/Israeli Political Thought," 35, no. 1 (2008): 1-20, esp. 1-9 in relation to a non-nuanced reading of the situation of the Jews in Iran prior to the Iranian Revolution in 1979. See also the historical survey by Jon Stratton, "(Dis)placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora," 301-329.

⁸⁵ William Safran, "Comparing Diasporas: A Review Essay," 280.

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active physical return movement is not any longer a widely shared characteristic of the diaspora.⁸⁶ It is a disputable issue whether return is actually part of the diaspora mindset and much more evidence is needed to support this theory. Nevertheless, for the sake of the investigation as to whether Genesis contains the often-claimed return movement, the return characteristic will be maintained and investigated.

2.4.4. Assessment of Robin Cohen's Definition

Cohen proposed a typology of diasporas for his classification of the term *diaspora*. These 'types' of diaspora are: victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural diasporas.⁸⁷ He noted that this typology is not static but that different diasporic groups can take dual or multiple forms and also change their type over time. Cohen tried to give consideration to all possible meanings of the diasporic formation.

According to Cohen the common features of a diaspora are:

- i). Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
- ii). Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
- iii). A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
- iv). An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
- v). The development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;

⁸⁶ James Clifford, "Diasporas (in *Cultural Anthropology*)," 305. For an assessment of the impact of Clifford's article, see Ruth Mayer, *Diaspora*, 10.

⁸⁷ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, x. For a critique of the attempts of Robin Cohen and James Clifford, see Floya Anthias, "Evaluating 'Diaspora': Beyond Ethnicity?," 561-571 or William Safran, "Comparing Diasporas: A Review Essay," 255-291.

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- vi). A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
- vii). A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
- viii). A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
- ix). The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.⁸⁸

Cohen points out that recent research into diasporic communities and also refugee/migration experience has highlighted the fact that a combination of voluntary (economical) and involuntary reasons (persecution, war, famine) lies at the heart of motivation to migrate,⁸⁹ and that which is true for the modern-day migrant is also true for the historic Jewish experience. Cohen adapts, expands and modifies Safran's 'classical' definition and expands its meaning to incorporate the idea of trade migration and imperial/colonizing diasporas, a period of time/settlement, common identity with co-ethnic members in other countries and the creative and enriching features of diaspora. An important feature of Cohen's work is that it allows for the duality of voluntary *and* compelled migration and it acknowledges that the period of living in a host-country challenges the diaspora to address new and unknown issues that were not faced before.

The strength of Cohen's work lies in his use of case studies to illustrate his findings and in his decision to let his theorising provide an inclusive list of common features rather than an exclusive definition. This strategy enables him to broaden any definition of diaspora that is too narrow, especially those built on the normative Jewish experience and to accommodate the dynamics and multiplicities of reasons for the human experience. The notion that Jewish diasporic experience is more diverse

⁸⁸ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, 26.

⁸⁹ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, 180.

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(e.g. the duality of voluntary *and* compelled migration) than the classical notion of a 'victim' diaspora is of great value for furthering an understanding of this field of study.

However, Cohen assumes that in order to qualify to be a diaspora, every group needs to fulfil all eight common features of diaspora. This raises the question of whether diaspora communities are static and resistant to change or fluid and open to (non-essential) adaptations, something that Cohen acknowledges. John R. Hinnells asks the pointed question of whether American Jews who do not want to return to Israel cease being part of the diaspora.⁹⁰ This creates an uneasy dichotomy between the notion that the Jewish experience is understood to be normative and that even in Ezra's time Jews refused to return to the land of their forefathers. Furthermore, Cohen's theorising excludes the whole formative notion of religion and the shaping influence of religion as an identity marker for the diasporic community.⁹¹ In the social sciences the importance and 'significance of religious belief, symbolic references and organizational structures in the formation of diasporic identities' has been increasingly recognized and rediscovered.⁹²

2.4.5. Modified Characteristics of Diaspora

The anthropological definition used in this study to trace diasporic features in the book of Genesis will be a combination of Safran and Cohen's characteristics. An important corrective will be added to the

⁹⁰ John R. Hinnells, "Book Review of Robin Cohen's 'Global Diasporas: An Introduction'," *International Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1999): 156-157, esp. 157.

⁹¹ On the importance of religion as an identity marker in antiquity, see also Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 316. Similarly, Steve Mason notes the interrelated nature of the modern categorisation of ethnicity, culture, philosophy and religion in antiquity; see Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," 480-488.

⁹² Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan, and Carolin Alfonso, "Introduction to Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research," 6.

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fourth characteristic ('strong ethnic group consciousness'): the *religious* group consciousness. There is no doubt that until recently, a religious worldview was excluded from diaspora definitions and was replaced by ethnic and cultural criteria. In this study, a special place of enquiry will be reserved for the religious group consciousness and the contribution of religion and religious identity to the formation and sustaining of a diaspora community on foreign soil.⁹³ The modified characteristics will include the disputed motif of the return movement, because it is part of all historical reconstructions of the restoration period in biblical scholarship. Overall, this study does not attempt to produce a valid list of diaspora characteristics for antiquity, because the question of the existence of Jewish diaspora communities is already positively answered. Rather this study focuses on how the diaspora situation influenced the theologizing of the *golah*/diaspora community and how the modified characteristics help to understand and detect the influence of the *golah* on selected biblical texts.

⁹³ See especially the discussion and examples in Martin Baumann, *Alte Götter in neuer Heimat*, 30-44, where he comes to the same conclusion. For example (p. 33), 'Wie bei vielen Migrantengruppen zu beobachten ist, erfolgt in der neuen Umwelt, in der Diaspora, eine geschärfte Selbstwahrnehmung der eigenen kulturell-religiösen Tradition. Erst in der "Fremde", in der Konfrontation mit anderen Glaubensformen und säkularer Umwelt, wird die religiöse Orientierung als distinktiv und bedeutsam erachtet. Der im Heimatland als selbstverständlich angenommene Bezug zur religiösen Tradition und ihren Deutungen wird in Situationen der Diaspora von einer latenten zu einer manifesten Größe.' ['As observable in many migrant communities, in a new surroundings, in the diaspora, a heightened sense of one's own cultural-religious traditions occur. Only in a 'foreign environment', only in the confrontation with another set of beliefs as well as a secular surrounding, is one's religious orientation recognised as distinct and significant. In one's home country the naturally accepted religious tradition and their interpretation changes from latent to a manifested dimension.'] See also Gerrie ter Haar, "The African Diaspora in Europe: some important Themes and Issues," in *Strangers and Sojourners: Religious Communities in the Diaspora* (ed. Gerrie ter Haar; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 37-58, esp. 51-54.

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The following features are a combination of the most noteworthy characteristics raised by Safran and Cohen:

- i). Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;⁹⁴
- ii). Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;⁹⁵
- iii). A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;⁹⁶
- iv). A regard of their ancestral homeland as their true ideal home and the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;⁹⁷
- v). The development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;⁹⁸
- vi). A strong ethnic or religious group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Taken from Cohen but this point is identical with Safran's first point.

⁹⁵ Taken from Cohen, because Safran does not express this point explicitly, and so for reasons of clarity this is treated separately.

⁹⁶ Taken from Cohen but is identical with Safran's second point. Contra Denise Helly, "Diaspora: History of an Idea," 11.

⁹⁷ This point is taken from Safran, as it expresses in the clearest fashion the dichotomy between the true and ideal home and the fact that the historical return movement after Cyrus' degree was so small.

⁹⁸ Taken from Cohen but is similar to Safran's fifth point.

⁹⁹ Taken from Cohen but is similar to the second half of Safran's sixth point.

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vii). A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;¹⁰⁰

viii). A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement;¹⁰¹

ix). The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.¹⁰²

2.5. Diaspora Communities in Antiquity

Although the concept of diaspora is closely associated with the Jewish experience, it has numerous predecessors in the ANE.¹⁰³ Karel van der Toorn rightly summarises, 'the frequent references to the 'gathering of scattered people' in royal inscriptions, such as those of Hammurabi (ca. 1750 BCE), suggest that the dispersion of communities was frequent in the ancient Near East.'¹⁰⁴ A feature of these diaspora communities (in the Old Babylonian period - ca. 1800-1600 BCE) is that their ancestral religion was part of the intrinsic identity and not something that was

¹⁰⁰ Taken from Cohen but is identical with Safran's third point. This point conveys the general notion that living in a host country, a certain amount of alienation and 'not fitting in' will always prevail.

¹⁰¹ Taken from Cohen but is identical with Safran's last point.

¹⁰² This point is unique to Cohen's theory. In relation to exile, Said disputes the idea that anything positive could ever come out of exile. See Edward W. Said, "Reflections on Exile," 160. The JE/P combined edition of the book of Genesis with its diaspora concern and its response to Mesopotamian mythology (e.g. Gilgamesh, Atrahasis epic, *Enūma Elish*), and its creative combination of two theologies is in itself a witness to the distinct creative and enriching life of the diaspora.

¹⁰³ For a discussion of ANE diaspora communities prior to 587 BCE, see Karel van der Toorn, "Near Eastern Communities in the Diaspora before 587 BCE," in *Strangers and Sojourners: Religious Communities in the Diaspora* (ed. Gerrie ter Haar; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 59-75.

¹⁰⁴ Karel van der Toorn, "Near Eastern Communities in the Diaspora," 59.

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abandoned easily.¹⁰⁵ The ancestral religion was an essential element to help maintain and enforce a separate social identity from the people living in the same location.

An example from late antiquity might help to highlight the fact that religious identity markers are intrinsically attached to one's ancestral religion. The Palmyrene diaspora in the Roman period shows persisting signs among its empire-wide scattered military communities of a preference for their ancestral Palmyrene deities.¹⁰⁶ This is especially remarkable since the Palmyrene religion is polytheistic. The general expectation is that it is more likely that a polytheistic religion will become inclusive of other deities as opposed to a monotheistic religion, which will guard its exclusive practice from foreign influence. From this and similar examples, a general tendency can be extracted that in a tolerant diaspora situation one's own religio-cultural identity will not easily be compromised.

Keeping in mind that the family was the primary setting for religious devotion, the best way to understand the religious environment in the ANE is to notice the difference between national gods in the public setting and the family gods in the private setting. It goes without saying that greater loyalty was shown, generally and specifically in a migrant setting, to the family gods than to the national deities.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is not surprising that migration did not diminish the continuation of religious devotion to the ancestral family deity. What is apparent for a small family unit, is even more evident when groups with priests migrate,

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of an internal Babylonian migration diaspora in the Old Babylonian period, see Karel van der Toorn, "Near Eastern Communities in the Diaspora," 60-63.

¹⁰⁶ For a full discussion, see Lucinda Dirven, "The Palmyrene Diaspora in East and West: a Syrian Community in the Diaspora in the Roman Period," in *Strangers and Sojourners: Religious Communities in the Diaspora* (ed. Gerrie ter Haar; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 77-94.

¹⁰⁷ Karel van der Toorn, "Migration and the Spread of Local Cults," in *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski* (ed. K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors; Leuven: Peeters, 1995), p. 365-377, esp. 366-367.

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taking with them a cultural-religious official point of identity. This hints at the continuing importance of the priestly class in foreign lands to the continuation of worship and cultural identity but also to the transmission and increase of public worship. This example is thus strikingly similar to that which was faced by the Judahite priestly class in the Babylonian diaspora.

2.6. Life in the Diaspora during the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods

It is often remarked that the biblical writers are surprisingly silent about the whole exilic period; even so, it is thought to be of major importance for the creation of the biblical texts. Actually, not very much is known about the actual condition of any of the displaced populations in Mesopotamia in the Assyrian and Babylonian empires but more information is available from the Neo-Babylonian time onwards.¹⁰⁸ It is known that deportees were settled together in ethnic homogenous communities, an important sociological element for ethnic survival.¹⁰⁹ It is also documented that in the year 529 BCE there was an 'assembly of the elders

¹⁰⁸ Due to the nature of this study this investigation into the living situation of the exiles and the earliest diaspora is limited in its scope and depth.

¹⁰⁹ Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 399-411, esp. 400-401. See also Kathleen Abraham, "An Inheritance Division Among Judeans in Babylonia from the Early Persian Period (from the Moussaieff Tablet Collection)," in *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean and Cuneiform* (ed. Meir Lubetski; HBM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 206-221, esp. 211 n. 12); Israel Eph'al, "The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th-5th Centuries B.C.: Maintenance and Cohesion," *Or* 47 (1978): 74-90, esp. 80-83; David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence Pertaining to the Transition from Neo-Babylonian to Achaemenid Administration in Palestine," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; STAR 5; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 219-235, esp. 234; Peter Machinist, "Mesopotamian Imperialism and Israelite Religion: A Case Study from the Second Isaiah," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past* (ed. William

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of the Egyptians' in Babylon and enclaves and settlements of Elamites, Barcaeans, Eretrians and the inhabitants of Miletus are also recorded.¹¹⁰ It is evident that, the deportees' geographical background was thought to be of importance as it was recorded by the imperial overlords. Āl-Yāhūdu, the city of Judah, is a prime example of this.¹¹¹ Another important institution became the focus during the Babylonian exile, the *ba tyb* (*bet ab* - 'father's house'), which is one of the few social organisations (beside the Levites and priests) that survived the disruption of the nation's demise.¹¹² At the same time the family offered protection and help to its members which might explain the emphasis on this unit over and above the wider clan.

The historical information from the Achaemenid period (continuity is assumed with pre-Achaemenid Babylonian institutions) provides sufficient insights about the situation of the deportees and their descendants.¹¹³ Overall the deportees remained settled in ethnic homogenous groups and comprised men, women and children. Their *kurtaš* status (official or royal slaves) was passed from the mothers to the children. It is also known that a small group of *kurtaš* were working in mixed ethnic groups. On the whole the deportees remained in homogeneous groups with internal cohesion as the Achaemenids recognised a group's internal traditional structure, its cultural distinctiveness and its religious practices. They were given imperial land to cultivate and were expected

G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 237-264, esp. 255.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion about the Egyptians in Babylon, see Israel Eph'al, "The Western Minorities in Babylonia," 76-80. For the other references, see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 438, 505.

¹¹¹ Cf. the Weidner tablets. For a similar practice in Ugaritic sources, see Anson F. Rainey, "Who is a Canaanite? A Review of the Textual Evidence," *BASOR* 304 (1996): 1-15, esp. 4.

¹¹² For a discussion see H. G. M. Williamson, "The Family in Persian Period Judah: Some Textual Reflections," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past* (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 469-485, esp. 477.

¹¹³ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 75.

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to pay their tributes (taxes, labour, military personnel) to the king.¹¹⁴ This does not mean that all Judahites, especially of subsequent deportations, were always settled in the same region. Deported military personnel were stationed in ethnically mixed garrisons under Persian leadership.¹¹⁵ Some deportees were settled on land belonging to the crown which they had to work and for which they paid an annual tribute or tax (*ilku*). Furthermore, they were conscripted when needed as part of the *corvée* (forced or statutory labour) system to undertake work (e.g. road or construction work and also maintenance of canals) as ordered by the satrap or the local or central administration. Others were used in building projects, or workshops or as colonial settlers in Persian agricultural development projects (e.g. Armenia). In the main, deportees belong to a group known as *kurtas* (official or royal slaves). Pierre Briant points out that the Persian administration considered them an 'undifferentiated labor force that the administration intended to exploit unhindered.'¹¹⁶ The administration used them when and where they needed. From the Murašû archive it is known that Judahites were settled on land with names like 'bow estate,' 'horse estate' or 'chariot estate.' The tenants of these plots of lands were to provide soldiers (archers, horse-men, or chariots) for the imperial administration when an order of mobilisation was given. From the time of Darius onwards regular call-ups are recorded in the imperial archives. The expenses of a farmer turned soldier were not met by the crown but rather the soldier had to assemble at the local meeting place fully armed and with enough funds to support himself throughout the campaign. For example, in 513 BCE, when a horseman was called up for three years, he had to buy his own mule and provide for its feed. He also had to gather together 12 lightly-armed men, again with their own equipment (clothing, blankets, travel bags, shoes, oil, salt, etc.).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 506.

¹¹⁵ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 342.

¹¹⁶ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 439.

¹¹⁷ For more details, see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 405. See also the example of Gadāl-lāma from Nippur who was owner of a parts of a 'horse

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The information regarding exiles in the biblical records shows competing assessments of life under the imperial administration. A negative picture (or an indication of the real situation of the majority voices of the displaced population) emerges for Yehud under Neo-Babylonian rule. The voices of both Ezra and Nehemiah describe the general condition of the population as 'slavery' (Neh 5:5; Ezra 9:9, 36).¹¹⁸ Jeremiah, together with the other deportees is taken into exile in chains (Jer 40:1). Smith-Christopher examines the biblical text for evidence of slavery in terms of labour conditions at the time of the exile and concludes that both metaphors of imprisonment and references to places of imprisonment increase in the exilic period.¹¹⁹ He also cites cuneiform inscription from Nebuchadnezzar II, together with some Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts, which show that forced labour is associated with ruling conquered populations.¹²⁰ Bustenay Oded points out that slavery was not the aim of the mass-deportations but the use of the deportees according to their professional vocation.¹²¹ A minority were slaves but overall slave labour was not an important element of the ANE economy. It is fair to conclude that the majority of Northern Israelites and Judahites were probably pressed into forced labour for the central

estate' but agreed to fulfil the military service on behalf of the other owner after receiving the military equipment as part of a deal.

¹¹⁸ However, see Manfred Oeming's new translation of Neh 9:36-37. He proposes the translation: 'Look, we, we today are serving in the land that you promised our fathers. Look, we, we are (your) servants on it. And it reproduces its fruit for the kings that you (legitimately) placed over us because of the sins (of our fathers). They reign over our bodies and over our livestock with benevolent care. Yet we are now in great distress (because we once again are close to rejecting your Torah.' See Manfred Oeming, "'See, We Are Serving Today' (Nehemiah 9:36): Nehemiah 9 as a Theological Interpretation of the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 571-588, esp. 584.

¹¹⁹ Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 73.

¹²⁰ Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 67.

¹²¹ Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979), 77, 92.

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imperial government. Furthermore, one might infer from Ezekiel's reference to the settlement of the community on a *tel*, that Judahite communities were settled in areas that needed to be rebuilt and resettled.¹²²

An undifferentiated picture emerges from the early exilic works of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, who do not describe the hardship of the exile but rather focus on the continuity of life under a new reality. This is also true for the books of Daniel and Esther. The hardship of daily life, the burdens of both *corvée* labour and high taxation, are not recorded in the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah. No complaints from the deportees are mentioned with regards to their living condition and thus the subject is not addressed in the books. Life goes on, people marry and have children, build houses, pay taxes, attend religious ceremonies, try to make a living and make the best of their circumstances. Ezekiel had a house in Tel-Harsha along the Chebar Canal (Ezek 1:1, 3; 3:15, 23). The communal leaders ('elders of Judah/Israel' – Ezek 8:1; 14:1; 20:1, 3) kept their traditional authority and some form of community life must have continued. The picture of life in the Babylonian *golah*, as envisioned by Jeremiah (Jer 29:5-7), who writes to the 597 BCE deportees, is one of a rather undisturbed quiet existence: they were able to build houses, plant gardens, enjoy their products, engage in commerce, marry and multiply and could meet together by the 'waters of Babylon.' This assessment is surprising in light of the evidence of the *kurtaš* situation of the deportees. It is also possible that some members of the 597 deportation (e.g. members of the Judahite intelligentsia) did receive for their unconditional surrender benefits from the Babylonian administration (like Gedaliah, Son of Shaphan – Jer 40:5).¹²³ Nevertheless all of this

¹²² See also the archaeological survey cited by Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 68 in Robert McCormick Adams, *Heartland of Cities: Survey of Ancient Settlement and Land Use on the Central Floodplain of the Euphrates* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981), 177.

¹²³ The speech of the Assyrian Rabshakeh (2 Kgs 18:19-35) before the gates of Jerusalem in 701 BCE also alludes to the benefits given for surrender. The act of surrender did not mean an exclusion from deportation at that time.

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is in line with Jeremiah's theology that stresses the divine will to surrender to the Babylonians and divine blessing on those who obey.¹²⁴

An important place in the wider discussion of aspects of the Judahite diaspora is held by the diaspora community in Elephantine. The earliest Judahite¹²⁵ diaspora correspondence that is currently available comes from the military garrison on the island of Elephantine on the border between Egypt and Nubia.¹²⁶ The Elephantine papyri, written in Aramaic, provide important insights into the life of a Judahite diaspora community in the 5th century BCE in Egypt. The findings include legal documents (obligation, conveyance, wifehood), private and official letters, literary

¹²⁴ For a full discussion of this see 3.4. of this study.

¹²⁵ It is widely recognized that 'Jew' and 'Jewish' is an anachronistic term for this period of antiquity and reads a later development back into an earlier period. Some will exclude especially the earliest diaspora (in Elephantine or in āl-Yāhūdu) from being 'Jewish' because the form of 'Judaism' that is practised there does not agree with Judaism as it is known from later periods. Judaism as a religious system did not develop that early and these communities are evidence of a form of poly-Yahwism or at least a form that is not Yahwistic in the orthodox-deuteronomistic and rabbinic sense. For the same point of criticism in regard to the Jewish settlements in Transjordan, see Adam Lowry Porter, "Transjordanian Jews in the Greco-Roman Period: A Literary-Historical Examination of Jewish Habitation East of the Jordan River from its Biblical Roots through the Bar-Kochba Revolt" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1999), 6.

¹²⁶ It is suggested that the religious outlook of the Elephantine community reflects pre-exilic Judah, which points to the establishment of the community by non-forced migration; see Paul-Eugène Dion, "La religion des papyrus d'Éléphantine: un reflet du Juda d'avant l'exil," in *Kein Land für sich allein: Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebir-nâr für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Ulrich Hübner and Ernst Axel Knauf; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 2002), 243-254. Also Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Judeans, Jews, Children of Abraham," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period*, (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 461-482 or Bob Becking, "Yehudite Identity in Elephantine," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period*, (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 403-419.

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texts (*The Words of Ahiqar*),¹²⁷ historical texts (a copy of the Bitun inscription by Darius I), accounts and lists. The documents cover the period from 495 to 400 BCE. 316 different individuals are recorded in the papyri and they cover three generations. Ernst Axel Knauf estimates the total population of the community to have been circa 2,500-3,000 people.¹²⁸ Elephantine achieved prominence in the discussion of 'Jewish' diaspora communities because the community built and maintained a Yahwistic temple dedicated to YHW (why - not hwhy YHWH). The form of their worship is syncretistic and the community wrote a report and a petition in the name of all the Judahites in Elephantine to Bagavahya, governor of Judah (a letter was also sent to the governor of Samaria), requesting a letter of recommendation for the rebuilding of the temple and this was to be sent to the satrap of Egypt. The hoped for recommendation was received orally by a joint endorsement of the Yehudian and Samaritan governors. The diaspora community in Elephantine referred to themselves as Yehudians but sometimes as Arameans.¹²⁹ In

¹²⁷ *The Words of Ahiqar* is classified as a diaspora novella, see for example Horst Seebass, "Zur Quellenentscheidung in der Josephsgeschichte," in *Joseph: Bibel und Literatur* (ed. Friedemann W. Golka and Wolfgang Weiß; Oldenburg: BIS Verlag, 2000), 25-36, esp. 29.

¹²⁸ He based his calculation mainly on the presence of four, at one time three, army units totalling 500-600 soldiers each. This is then multiplied by 5 for family size. See Ernst Axel Knauf, "Elephantine und das vor-biblische Judentum," in *Religion und Religionskontakte im Zeitalter der Achämeniden* (ed. Reinhard Gregor Kratz; VWGT 22; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 2002), 179-188, esp. 181-182.

¹²⁹ Reinhard Gregor Kratz, "Judean Ambassadors and the Making of Jewish Identity: The Case of Hananiah, Ezra, Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 421-444. An example known from the Elephantine Papyri is also Mahseiah son of Jenadiah. He refers to himself, when dictating the legal document to the scribe, as a Judean (*yehudi* - ydwhy) or as an Aramean (*arammi* - ymra). He is called an Aramean in the following documents: B2.1; B2.6 (marriage contract with Miptahiah's Egyptian [second] husband); B2.7 (grant of the house to his daughter); B2.8. He is called a Judean in the following documents: B2.2; B2.3; B2.4. Normally in *TADAE B*,

Hebrew, of course, it is impossible to distinguish between the words 'Judeans' and 'Yehudians,' both are *ᾠδωwhyh* (*ha yehudim*).

2.6.1. On the Identification of the Judahite diaspora in Mesopotamia

Archaeological evidence for the earliest Judahite diaspora (in the pre-Hellenistic period) is scarce, yet the current findings do provide a good amount of information about the daily and religious identity in the different diaspora regions. In Mesopotamia the main sources of information are: a) inscriptions, b) the onomastic presence of west-Semitic names with Yahwistic theophoric elements and c) the presence of biblical names.¹³⁰ These findings are sometimes the only evidence for the presence of a Judahite diaspora, of an uncertain size, in a certain region or province.

The two main criteria for identifying Judahites among West Semitic names on Babylonian tablets are, a) the labelling *yehudāya* (it is found only on a very few tablets); or b) compound names with a form of the divine name.¹³¹ Theophoric elements considered to be Judahite/Judean

the ethnic self-descriptions are not used interchangeably in the same document. The only exception is the reconstruction of *TADAE* B5.5, which seems to use the term Aramean as a professional description (Mipta[hiah of Gemariah, a *Jewess*] of Elephantine the fortress (and) an Aramean according to her detachment, said to Isweri daughter of Gemar[i]ah, a *Jewess of the same [detachment]*, saying: ...).

¹³⁰ The most comprehensive information is based on papyri, which are only found in the conserving climatic conditions in Elephantine in Upper Egypt. Yet no inscriptions, which are a distinct feature of the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt, are known from Elephantine so far; either they did not produce them or they did not survive. For a detailed discussion of the problem of identifying inscriptions as Jewish see the detailed introduction in Walter Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis: 2 Kleinasien* (TSAJ 99; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

¹³¹ David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 220.

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are Yh/Yw/Yhw.¹³² Babylonian scribes rendered the theophoric element *-yaw* as *-ia-a-ma*.¹³³ It is not only the name of the individual that helps in the 'ethnic' identification but also theophoric elements in genealogies in which the name appears.¹³⁴ This study is exclusively interested in the *golah* and the Judahite diaspora associated with it after the year 597 BCE, so for that reason the archaeological evidence presented and considered here is limited to the period following the first deportation.

A clear-cut distinction between Judeans, Judahites, Israelites and Samaritans¹³⁵ based on onomastic grounds cannot purely be made based on the name or the presence of the Yahwistic theophoric element.¹³⁶ Neo-Assyrian tablets excavated at Tell Seh Hamad, ancient

¹³² Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods according to the Babylonian Sources* (SHJPLI 3; Haifa: University of Haifa, 1979), 7. See also Graham I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions: Corpus and Concordance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xi. His conclusion is that linguistically a Hebrew text is not distinguishable from a Phoenician, Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite or even sometimes an Aramaic one. This is especially true for seal-inscriptions that do not contain any further information other than the personal name.

¹³³ See among others, David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 225.

¹³⁴ For a further discussion of non-Yahwistic names and its identification, see Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 22-34.

¹³⁵ Judeans originate from Yehud, Judahites from the kingdom of Judah and Israelites from the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Samaritans from Samaria.

¹³⁶ Onomastic evidence from Samaria (representatives of the elite and also low-ranking slaves) in the Persian period points to a widespread use of names with a Yahwistic theophoric element. See Frank Moore Cross, "Personal Names in the Samaria Papyri," *BASOR* 344 (2006): 75-90, esp. 86-87. Further research may be able to shed more light on the Judean attitude towards their exiled northern 'brothers,' their restoration and incorporation into the nation. Christopher R. Seitz argues for an ongoing connection between Southerners and Northerners in exilic and post-exilic biblical writings, see Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict: Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah* (BZAW 176; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 28; see also David C. Greenwood, "On the Jewish Hope for a Restored Northern Kingdom," *ZAW* 88, no. 3 (1976): 376-385, esp. 377-379.

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Dur-Katlimmu in the lower Habur region which date between 605 and 602 BCE, also refer to five individuals with Yahwistic names:

Ahzi-Yau (meaning 'Yahu has taken');

Hazaqi-Yau (identical to the biblical Hezekiah);

Menasê (a vocalization of Manasseh, king of Judah but two returnees are also known with this name - cf. Ezra10:30, 33);

Same'-Yau (identifiable with Š^ema'yāh(û), 'attested in connection with all periods of Israelite history ... The name occurs also very frequently at Elephantine, from the 6th to the 4th centuries B.C.'¹³⁷) and

Zabudu (this name finds its parallel in the biblical Zabud (1 Kgs 4:5) and is also attested in 5th century Elephantine).¹³⁸

These names are a witness to a wider and shared onomastic tradition shared by Israelite, Judahite, Judean and Samaritan over an extended period.

Onomastic identification is no complete guide and proof to the ethnic identity of a person. Not all Judahite settlers can be identified as Judahites, since the adaptation of Akkadian or Aramaic names makes

The Judean prophets in the Hebrew Bible did not regard Samaria as a syncretistic mix of foreign settlers and Northerners who remained behind. Only the late book of Chronicles does this. Reinhard Pummer makes the following helpful observation, 'The texts of Isa 11:12-13; Jer 23:5-6, 31:17-20, and 41:5; Ezek 37:15-28; and Zech 8:13, 9:13, and 10:6-12 presuppose that the inhabitants of Samaria are part of the people of Israel and that the inhabitants of the North share a common faith with the residents of the South. This inspires the hope that one day the unity of Ephraim and Judah will be restored. Had the Northerners been seen as pagans, prophecies of this sort would not have been enunciated.' See Reinhard Pummer, "The Samaritans and their Pentateuch," in *The Pentateuch as Torah* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 237-269, esp. 259-260.

¹³⁷ Frederick Mario Fales, "West-Semitic Names in the Šēh Hamad Texts," *SAAB* 7, no. 2 (1993): 139-50, esp. 148.

¹³⁸ *TADAE* B3.2 (of 451 BCE).

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them unidentifiable if there is nothing else to hint at a Judahite background.¹³⁹ Two issues further complicate the identification of members of the Judahite diaspora. The first is 'loan names', which are names of foreign origin that become part (even only for a time) of the Judahite onomastic tradition.¹⁴⁰ The second is 'multi-lingual names', which are names whose root is Hebrew but which share a sound similarity to a root in a foreign language (e.g. the increased popularity of names with the root *`ēl* is sometimes attributed to this phenomenon).<sup>141</sup> The identification of names with *`ēl* (it is simultaneously used in Akkadian, Aramaic and Hebrew), is also important for the determination of the presence of Judahites.

Loan names (though with foreign non-theophoric elements) are known among the returnees, for example: Zebina (Aramaic meaning 'bought' - Ezra 10:43), Bebai (Akkadian meaning 'baby'- Ezra 2:11; 8:11; 10:28; Neh 7:16; 10:15),¹⁴² Hattush (meaning and origin unknown - 1 Chr 3:22; Ezra 8:2; Neh 3:10; 10:4; 12:2); Azgad (etymology uncertain but not Semitic - Ezra 2:12; 8:12; Neh 7:17; 10:15) , Bigvai (Persian name – Ezra

¹³⁹ David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 221; Mark Hamilton, "Who Was a Jew? Jewish Ethnicity during the Achaemenid Period," *Restoration Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1995): 102-114. For a discussion of the problem of assimilation and identity and the modern reconstruction of these diaspora communities, see Lucinda Dirven, "The Palmyrene Diaspora in East and West: a Syrian Community in the Diaspora in the Roman Period," 78.

¹⁴⁰ Michael D. Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents* (HSM 7; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1976), 124.

¹⁴¹ Michael Coogan argues that the choice of such ambiguous names allows pious members of the diaspora to have names that sound Babylonian but are really Hebrew, see Michael Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names*, 125.

¹⁴² 'This is the first example of the use by the exiles of neutral. i.e., profane, Babylonian names. Such a practice indicates the gradual integration of the exiles into Babylonian society, while at the same time showing a religious sensitivity: an unwillingness on the part of at least some to adopt Mesopotamian deities as theophorous elements.' See Michael Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names*, 120.

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2:2, 14; 8:14; Neh 7:7, 19; 10:16) and the case of the descendants of Elam (Ezra 2:7, 31; 8:7, 10:2, 26; Neh 7:12, 34; 10:14; 12:42).¹⁴³

Ran Zadok observes that foreigners of most ethnic groups in Achaemenian Nippur gave their children Babylonian or Aramaic names.¹⁴⁴ For the Murašû archive, the following observation can be made: '38 of the Nippurean Jews bore Yahwistic names, 23 bore West Semitic names, 6 bore Akkadian names, and 2 Iranian names.'¹⁴⁵ An example of a potential loan name that also is a multi-lingual name is Zerubbabel. If it is a loan name (from Akkadian *zēr-babili*) it means 'seed of Babylon.'¹⁴⁶ It could also have been formed from the Hebrew root hrz (*zrh*) referring to 'seed' (*zera*) or 'sowing/scattering' (*zara*).¹⁴⁷ Another example could be Nekoda (Ezra 2:48, 60; Neh 7:50, 62), the name is attested in Akkadian and means 'moorhen' but it also could be derived from Hebrew *dqn* (*naqod*) meaning 'speckled, spotted.'¹⁴⁸ Overall (foreign) loan names or (neutral) multi-lingual names are not an indication of being non-Judahites.¹⁴⁹

Another problem in locating the earliest Judahite diaspora in the Babylonian empire is evident in relation to the professional background of the deportees. The Murašû archive and the findings from āl-Yāhūdu bear witness to the agricultural employment of deportees. Currently unknown is the whereabouts of the deported Israelite/Judahite soldiers. According to the deportation figures given in 2 Kings, the ratio between

¹⁴³ See the suggestion by Edelman that Elamites and Persians are among the re-settled returnees, Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 342.

¹⁴⁴ Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 3.

¹⁴⁵ Two badly preserved names were not included, see Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 33.

¹⁴⁶ This interpretation is the only one given in Bryan E. Beyer, "Zerubbabel," *ABD* 6:1085; Wolter H. Rose, "Zerubbabel," *DOTHB* 1016-1019; Bezael Porten, "Zerubbabel," *EncJud* 16:1000-1001.

¹⁴⁷ Jörn Kiefer, *Exil und Diaspora: Begrifflichkeit und Deutungen im antiken Judentum und in der hebräischen Bibel* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005), 182-185.

¹⁴⁸ Kenneth Hugh Cuffey, "Nekoda," *ABD* 4:1071.

¹⁴⁹ Michael Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names*, 121.

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soldiers and non-soldiers was 7:3 and this figure excludes the potential employment of craftsmen in military construction projects. Generally most Aramaic and West-Semitic names were found outside the cities. Another problem arises when only one person can be identified as being Israelite/Judahite. Does this indicate that there was a settled community but that no archival evidence has been uncovered so far? Or, if the findings are related to business deals, is it evidence for a diaspora community or business trip abroad?¹⁵⁰

At this stage it also needs to be noted that if the diaspora is only reconstructed from inscriptions, then religious conservative elements inevitably tend to dominate the research. The case of a Judahite who does not hold to an identifiable Judean/Yahwistic name; who does not write in Hebrew and who does not use exclusive Judean symbols or places is simply not identifiable as Judahite. This is noteworthy because any Judahite diaspora reconstruction will not be an accurate representation of diverse Judahite diaspora life but rather will highlight the traditional elements of the religion. So far in the reconstruction of Judahite diaspora life the papyri findings of Elephantine naturally feature most prominently because they provide the most accessible, detailed, multi-generational and comprehensive account of a Judahite/Judean diaspora in antiquity. Unique insights are provided by the Elephantine archives because they not only provide business details and onomastic information but also insights into the community's struggle to rebuild their temple.

¹⁵⁰ Pierre Briant points out that regional and interregional commerce is more common than long- or middle-distance trade, and that long distance commerce was through middleman (e.g. Phoenician sea-farers), for more details see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 383. A similar problem of identification exists around objects, e.g. bounty - see Nimrud Ivory, for inscriptions (engravings in objects). See also M. Heltzer, "Eight Century B.C. Inscriptions from Kalakh (Nimrud)," *PEQ* 110 (1978): 3-9.

2.6.2. Onomastics

Theophoric elements in names are an important element for the identification of Judahites in the diaspora.¹⁵¹ In the Hebrew Bible most of the names from the periods of the patriarchs, the wandering and the settlement (in a canonical reading) are non-Yahwistic. Their names often contain common and ancient Semitic theophorous elements.¹⁵² Thus, the change in name-creation and name-giving, as a reoccurring trend in society, signals a potential change in cultural and religious awareness in relation to Yahwism.¹⁵³ The Hebrew Bible knows of only four people of non-Israelite origin with a Yahwistic theophoric element in their name; Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11:3), Joram the Aramean prince (2 Sam 8:10; according to 1 Chr 18:10 his name is Hadoram, without the theophoric element), Reaiah (Ezra 2:47, Neh 7:50) and Shephatiah (Ezra 2:57, Neh 7:59).¹⁵⁴ The Hebrew Bible witnesses to the fact that in the

¹⁵¹ Judean names were also influenced by Aramaic, 'but most Yahwistic names are Hebrew. They are typical of the late Biblical and post-Biblical onomasticon and the onomasticon of Elephantine.' See Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 13.

¹⁵² Ran Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy and Prosopography* (OLA 28; Leuven: Peeters, 1988), 15-16, makes the point that in the period of the Judges, 40% of names have a theophoric name; but in the period of the United Monarchy most names are theophorous.

¹⁵³ For a study of theophoric elements in relation to pre-exilic Israelites, see Jeffrey H. Tigay, "Israelite Religion: The Onomastic and Epigraphic Evidence," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Jr. Miller, et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 157-194, esp. 162-163 who concludes that out of the 738 names only 27 refer to a foreign deity. For a similar conclusion based on a study of Hebrew seals; see Nahman Avigad, "The Contribution of Hebrew Seals to an Understanding of Israelite Religion and Society," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Jr. Miller, et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 195-208.

¹⁵⁴ This list is from Ran Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite*, 1. Nezhiah (Ezra 2:54) may also qualify for inclusion. The inclusion of Reaiah and Shephatiah is based on them being ancestral name givers for the clans of the *Nethinim*, the temple servants and Solomon's servants in Ezra-Nehemiah's temple. Due to their predominantly foreign names they are thought to be of foreign origin. For

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Judahite diaspora some adopted or were given names with a foreign theophoric element: Esther (derived from Babylonian Ishtar),¹⁵⁵ Mordecai (from the Babylonian Marduk) and Bilshan (derived from Bel),¹⁵⁶ and among the returnees from Babylon: Sheshbazzar/Shenazzar (meaning: may the moon god Sin protect [the father]), who laid the foundation of the Jerusalem temple. Onomastic findings can only provide limited insights into the earliest diaspora communities; they can establish the presence of individuals and in some cases their immediate family. Onomastic evidence may also help in establishing the size of the community. However, some members of the diaspora will remain invisible because they cannot conclusively be linked (on onomastic grounds) to the Judahite diaspora, since they chose or were given names that are not exclusively Yahwistic.¹⁵⁷

Iranian surnames (Zattu, Bigvai) among the repatriarchs in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7; see Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 41-43. Yet it cannot be excluded that list of returnees in Nehemiah 7 includes Elamites and Persian administrative staff; see Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 342.

For cuneiform documentation of a non-Israelite/Judean ruler with a Yahwistic name (*Azri-Yau*) in 8th century Syria, see especially Stephanie Dalley, "Yahweh in Hamath in the 8th Century BC: Cuneiform Material and Historical Deductions," *VT* 40, no. 1 (1990): 21-32; E. Lipinski, "An Israelite King of Hamat?," *VT* 21, no. 3 (1971): 371-373; Ziony Zevit, "Yahweh Worship and Worshipers in 8th-Century Syria," *VT* 41, no. 3 (1991): 363-366.

¹⁵⁵ According to Esther 2:7, Esther also had a Hebrew name Hadassah (see also Dan 1:7). Thus, it remains a possibility that in the diaspora some had two names. One Jewish name and one local/official name. See also, Michael D. Coogan, "Life in the Diaspora: Jews at Nippur in the Fifth Century B.C.," *BA* 37, no. 1 (1974): 6-12, esp. 11.

¹⁵⁶ A similar case is recorded for the year 54/8 BCE for a slave with an Akkadian name who is explicitly identified as 'Greek.' Zadok suggests that the Akkadian name was given by his Babylonian master. See Ran Zadok, "On Anatolians, Greeks and Egyptians in 'Chaldean' and Achaemenid Babylonia," *TA* 32, no. 1 (2005): 76-106, esp. 79.

¹⁵⁷ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora: Israelites and Judeans in Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia* (PDRI 151; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2002), 18.

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The onomastic evidence does not provide an insight into an individual's religious outlook, as Paul-Alain Beaulieu points out. Individual Yahwistic names do not reflect a person's, or his/her parent's religious conviction, or even that of the society - it is simply a name.¹⁵⁸ He discovered, while comparing Yahwistic names in Judah and the diaspora from the last century of the monarchy until the end of the Persian period, that names in the diaspora show 'a clear persistence of Yahwistic names' (between 20-50% of the names). However, the theophoric Yahwistic element does not have the hegemonic position that characterises names in Judah in the late 7th and early 6th century BCE. Beaulieu notes that only in the lists of returnees preserved in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is a similar prominence of Yahwistic names regained. The reason he sees for this development is a traditional cultural attachment to Yahwistic names, rather than a Yahwistic restoration. What nevertheless is apparent is that the exiles held onto an ancestral link through name-giving to their home country of origin.¹⁵⁹

One issue that needs some consideration is whether in antiquity the modern abstract concepts of ethnicity and nationality played a significant factor in people's self-understanding, especially in that of the exiled populations of Judah/Yehud.¹⁶⁰ This problem finds its extension in biblical texts that raise the issue of the continuation of the term 'Israel' after the exile (in relation to Judah) and the new practice of applying

¹⁵⁸ See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Yahwistic Names in Light of Late Babylonian Onomastics," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 245-266. Moses is an example of a leader of Israel with a non-Yahwistic name. See also Richard Hess, "Aspects of Israelite Personal Names and Pre-Exilic Israelite Religion," in *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean and Cuneiform* (ed. Meir Lubetski; HBM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 301-313, esp. 301, who argues that names can reveal the popular faith of people, but not necessarily of the individual.

¹⁵⁹ See also Peter Machinist, "Mesopotamian Imperialism," 256.

¹⁶⁰ H. G. M. Williamson also attributes the exile, with its loss of social cohesion and stability, to an 'increased emphasis on ethnicity as a means of preserving a sense of communal identity;' see H. G. M. Williamson, "The Family in Persian Period Judah," 477.

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the self-description of 'true Israel' to the community. This question needs to be considered carefully, as most of the findings in this chapter are based on onomastic evidence rather than on evidence of geographical belonging.¹⁶¹ Everything that is known from the Hebrew Bible, especially as major redactions, are attributed to this period. The geographical ('ethnic,' national) element is intrinsically linked with the worship of their geographical/national God – YHWH.¹⁶² For the exilic period geographic (or 'ethnic') and religious Yahwistic identity belong intrinsically together. Thus, it should not be too surprising that the evidence for the Judahite diaspora gathered in this chapter is primarily based on the religious/national Yahwistic element in their name. Jon L. Berquist points out that identity is the result of multiple forces (religious, national, ethnic, cultural) and not simply of one of them.¹⁶³ This links well with James C. Miller's and Kenton L. Sparks's suggestion to view ethnicity primarily as a 'perceived shared ancestry,'¹⁶⁴ a view that clearly includes a shared religious identity.¹⁶⁵ From the perspective of

¹⁶¹ There are three cases of recorded geographical belonging known in the wider Judean diaspora: King Jehoiachin in the Weidner tablets, a description of Jerusalem in *The Babylonian Chronicle* (COS 1.137) as *Ya-a-hu-du*, and some texts in relation to *āl-Yāhūdu*, 'the city of Judah,' in the Nippur region.

¹⁶² For a discussion about national deities and their relation to the land; see Steven Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 30. There is no need to assume that the exilic/post-exilic period is marked by a shift from a national to a purely religious outlook of the community; see Marc Zvi Brettler, "Judaism in the Hebrew Bible? The Transition from Ancient Israelite Religion to Judaism," *CBQ* 61, no. 3 (1999): 429-447.

¹⁶³ Jon L. Berquist, "Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 53-66, esp. 63.

¹⁶⁴ James C. Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," *CBR* 6, no. 2 (2008): 170-213, esp. 205, see also Kenton Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 270.

¹⁶⁵ Anson F. Rainey, "Amarna and Later: Aspects of Social History," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past* (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin;

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the *golah* at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, it seems fair to conclude that geographical gentilics are important for the establishment of belonging or non-belonging. A telling case is the introduction of Tobiah as 'the Ammonite' in Neh 2:10. His name has a Yahwistic theophoric element, yet he is labelled with a foreign gentilic, indicating his non-belonging.¹⁶⁶ This attitude is reflected in Ezra's comment that those who intermarry with the 'people of the land' are labelled with a foreign gentilic, such as Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites (Ezra 9:1; cf. Ezek 16:3).¹⁶⁷

2.7. The Archaeological Evidence

This study analyses only the earliest Judahite evidence in Mesopotamia (roughly up to the 4th century BCE), as findings of the Hellenistic period do not have any bearing on this research and are already well established. This survey is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of

Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 169-187, esp. 172. See also Steven Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality*, 45.

¹⁶⁶ For a discussion, see also Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 33-38.

¹⁶⁷ Yet the spokesman for those Yehudites who intermarried in Ezra 10:2 is Shecaniah a 'descendant of Elam,' he has a Yahwistic name and is potentially an Elamite. The attitude expressed in Genesis towards the people of the land, and towards intermarriage with other people groups, differs from the one expressed in these chapters of Ezra and Nehemiah. For a discussion of these issues in Genesis, see 6.3.7. of this study. Therefore, caution should be applied as to whether, and to what degree, these views reflect the attitude of the whole *golah*.

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archaeological evidence relating to the Israelite,¹⁶⁸ Judahite¹⁶⁹ or Judean diasporas¹⁷⁰ in the pre-Hellenistic period. The focus of this study

¹⁶⁸ For evidence of the Israelite diaspora, see the discussion about the Horse List in Assyria, in Stephanie Dalley and J. N. Postgate, *The Tablets from Fort Shalmaneser* (CTN III; London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1984), pos. 85, 98-118. Tablet 99 lists 13 members of the Samarian unit. Almost all names are West Semitic and the table dates most probably to 710-708 BCE. Israel Eph'al presumes that only a few of the people are Israelites. For a discussion of the onomastics of these names, see Israel Eph'al, "'The Samarian(s)' in the Assyrian Sources," in *Ah, Assyria... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography presented to Hayim Tadmor* (ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph'al; Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1991), 36-45, esp. 41-45. Also Stephanie Dalley, "Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser and Sargon II," *Iraq* 47 (1985): 31-48; Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 12-20, or Mordecai Cogan, *Bound for Exile* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2013).

To this group one might want to add the two queens who have Hebrew names: *ʾIa-ba-a* (wife of Tiglath-Pileser III) and *ʾA-ta-li-a/ʾA-tal-ia-a* (wife of Sargon II), who are buried at Calah. For more details see Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 12 or Stephanie Dalley, "Recent Evidence from Assyrian Sources for Judaeon History from Uzziah to Manasseh," *JSOT* 28, no. 4 (2004): 387-401. Their circumstances do not indicate diaspora but rather diplomatic royal marriages.

For further evidence of Israelite/Judean individuals in Mesopotamia, see also Frederick Fales, "West-Semitic Names in the Šēh Hamad Texts," 148; Bob Becking, "West Semites at Tell Šēh Hamad: Evidence for the Israelite Exile?," in *Kein Land für sich allein: Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebirnāri für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Ulrich Hübner and Ernst Axel Knauf; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 2002), 153-166; David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 219-235.

¹⁶⁹ Hazaqi-Yau/ Hezekiah (a local landholder) might be evidence for a member of the 701 Judahite deportation into Assyria; so David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 221. Alternatively, it could be evidence of a cultural diaspora-homeland contact between the descendants of the earlier Israelite diaspora from the time of Sargon II who were reportedly deported to the Habur region (2 Kgs 17:6, 18:11), and the kingdom of Judah. Or, Hezekiah could be a popular name, though no reference to the name Hezekiah is recorded in the Hebrew Bible prior to the time of King Hezekiah of Judah.

¹⁷⁰ John Kessler lists further potential Judean diaspora communities in Galilee, Gaza, Ashdod, Idumea, Moab and Ammon. For further literature see, John

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lies in the evidence related to the theologizing of the *golah* community born in the vicinity of Babylon. The establishment of a comprehensive study of the Judahite diaspora in Babylon is at this stage severely limited as it cannot draw on the insights from more than 200 partially unpublished texts from āl-Yāhūdu and Našar. 103 of these cuneiform tablets were published in CUSAS28 in 2014 while the remaining tablets still await publication.¹⁷¹

2.7.1. 592/1 BCE - Weidner Tablets

The oldest archaeological evidence directly related to the 597 BCE *golah* are the so called Weidner tablets which refer to the exiled Jehoiachin, king of Judah, among others. This was the *only* document in which the ethnic designation 'Judean' was found in Babylonian records¹⁷² until new evidence from āl-Yāhūdu 'the city of Judah' was published

Kessler, "Persia's Loyal Yahwists," 94-95. For Idumea, see also André Lemaire, "New Aramaic Ostraca from Idumea and Their Historical Interpretation," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 413-456, esp. 417. Esther Eshel points out that in the Arad Aramaic ostraca the majority of names were Jewish (with -YH theophoric element) and most of the soldiers were Jews, see Esther Eshel, "The Onomasticon of Mareshah in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschits, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 145-156, esp. 150.

¹⁷¹ The significance of the companion is well summarised by Caroline Waerzeggers, "Readers should be aware, however, that the historical significance of these texts remains impossible to assess properly as long as the companion volume by Cornelia Wunsch and Laurie Pearce is outstanding (Judeans by the Waters of Babylon: New Historical Evidence in Cuneiform Sources from Rural Babylonia, announced 'forthcoming' as Babylonische Archive vol. 6 [BaAr 6])" (Caroline Waerzeggers, "Review Article: Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch, Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer," *STRATA* 33 (2015):179-194, esp. 181).

¹⁷² Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 4, 38.

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recently.¹⁷³ The date on the tablets is the seventh year of King Nebuchadnezzar (592/91 BCE).¹⁷⁴ This administrative document lists the ration paid to people who are either prisoners of war or otherwise dependant on the royal household:

10 (*sila* of oil) to ... [*la*]-¹-*kin*, king of *la*[...]
2 ½ *sila* (oil) to [... so]ns of the king of Judah (*la-a-hu-du*)
4 *sila* to 8 men from Judah (^{amel} *la-a-hu-da-a-a*)...

(text Babylon 28122, observe 29-33)

10 (*sila*) to *la-ku-ú-ki-nu*, the son of the king of *la-ku-du* (i.e. Judah)
2 ½ *sila* for the 5 sons of the king of Judah (*la-ku-du*) through
Qana'a [...]

(text Babylon 28178, reverse ii 17-18)¹⁷⁵

The Weidner tablets mention the king, his five unnamed sons, together with eight unnamed Judahites and five named Judahites: Qa-na-a-ma, Sa-ma-ku-ia-a-m[a], Šá-lam-ia-a-ma, the gardener,¹⁷⁶ Ga-di-'il and Ur-mil-ki. Zadok identified a further three Judahites in epigraphic sources in Babylonia in the Chaldean period: Sá-ni-ia-a-ma; Ha-ta-a-ma (recorded in a marriage contract with his son, who had an Akkadian

¹⁷³ See Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cuneiformes à onomastique ouest-sémitique," *Transeu* 17 (1999): 17-34; Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 401, *CUSAS28*. For a list of settlements named after their tribes' origin, see Ran Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods: An Onomastic Study* (Jerusalem: H. J. & Z. Wanaarta, 1977), 10-19.

¹⁷⁴ See David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 219-220. David S. Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (HSM 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 34 n 119. For the presence of other ethnic minorities/diasporas and their self-organisation and national identity in Babylon during the 6th-5th century BCE see, Israel Eph'al, "The Western Minorities in Babylonia," 76-88.

¹⁷⁵ *ANET*, 308.

¹⁷⁶ Babylonian scribes rendered the theophoric element *-yaw* as *-ia-a-ma*. See among others, David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 225.

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name, Nabû-aha-usur, dated to 542/41 BCE),¹⁷⁷ and Yehoyishma (dated by Nahman Avigad to around 540 BCE).¹⁷⁸ Yehoyishma is the daughter of Šamaš-šar-usur. She bears a Yahwistic name, whilst her father has a well-attested Neo-Babylonian name with the meaning 'Shamash protect the king.' More importantly, her own name appears on a seal indicating that she must have been of a higher social standing, as she could sign contracts and must have needed a seal. The seal is a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic scripts, which led Avigad to conclude that she ordered the seal from a Judahite 'craftsman, himself an exile, who showed acquaintance with the Aramaic script current in Babylonia but who was still familiar with the tradition of Hebrew writing.'¹⁷⁹

2.7.2. BM 74554

The Babylonian legal text BM 74554 (dated to 486 BCE) lists one subordinate of the governor of the Persian satrapy 'Babylon and Across-the-River,' whose name is Gadâlâma, Son of Banna-Ea. Vanderhooft suggests that the name, 'ga-da-la-a-ma or Ga-da-la-a-ma¹⁸⁰ is a transcription of Hebrew Gadalyaw.¹⁸¹ Helzer suggests alternatively that the Hebrew name behind the Akkadian spelling is Gedalyāhū, a name that is regularly attested in the Persian period in Babylon, Yehud and Egypt.¹⁸² This would then indicate that one hundred years after the deportations some Judahites could and did rise in the imperial hierarchy.

¹⁷⁷ Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 39. This evidence is based on Ha-ta-a-ma (even so being Aramaic) being a Yahwistic name.

¹⁷⁸ Nahman Avigad, "Seals of Exiles," *IEJ* 15, no. 4 (1965): 222-232, esp. 230.

¹⁷⁹ Nahman Avigad, "Seals of Exiles," 230.

¹⁸⁰ Babylonian scribes rendered the theophoric element *-yaw* as *-ia-a-ma*. See also Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 8.

¹⁸¹ David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 226. See also Stolper's comment on line 4 of the cuneiform tablet, Matthew W. Stolper, "The Governor of Babylon and Across-The-River in 486 B.C.," *JNES* 48, no. 4 (1989): 283-305, esp. 287.

¹⁸² M. Heltzer, "A Recently Published Babylonian Tablet and the Province of Judah after 516 B.C.E.," *Transeu* 5 (1992): 57-61, esp. 60.

2.7.3. TAYN – Texts from *āl-Yāhūdu* and *Našar/CUSAS28*

In 1999 Francis Joannès and André Lemaire published three cuneiform texts that fill the gap between the Weidner tablets (592/91 BCE) and the earliest text from the Murašû archive (454 BCE). Two of these are a direct witness to the Judahite diaspora. The first tablet is dated to 498 BCE and the second to 532 BCE, thus effectively providing important insights into the presence and whereabouts of Judahite diaspora communities. These tablets contain so far unattested Hebrew Yahwistic names in the diaspora, though these names are known from the Hebrew Bible and others from numerous Judahite inscriptions of the period.¹⁸³ The importance of these findings is directly related to the places of its composition.¹⁸⁴ One was written in the previously known Alu-ša-Našar while the other was composed in the previously unknown *āl-Yāhūdu* – ‘the city of Judah.’¹⁸⁵ Another important contribution is found in the first tablet discussed by Joannès and Lemaire as it attests to the culturally conservative character of the community, at least as far as the onomastic evidence is concerned, roughly 100 years after the initial deportation, as the majority of names are typically Judahite.¹⁸⁶ The second tablet deals with tax collection by the Judahite tax collector Abda-Yāhû from a local ‘governor’ Ahiqar, who is potentially an Aramean.

In 2007 Kathleen Abraham published another document from the TAYN corpus, which deals with an inheritance division among Judahites in

¹⁸³ Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cuneiforms," 20. Also W. G. Lambert, "A Document from a Community of Exiles in Babylonia," in *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean and Cuneiform* (ed. Meir Lubetski; HBM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 201-205.

¹⁸⁴ Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 400.

¹⁸⁵ Francis Joannès and André Lemaire refer to it as: 'Jérusalem de Babylonie,' because its population was supposedly deported from Jerusalem and its vicinity. This is based on the designation of *ia-a-hu-du* as circumlocution for Jerusalem in the Weidner tablets and in the Babylonian chronicles. See Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cuneiforms," 24-25, David S. Vanderhooft, "New Evidence," 224.

¹⁸⁶ Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cuneiforms," 27.

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Babylonia.¹⁸⁷ However, the date and place of the cuneiform is not preserved. One of the sons, Nēriyah son of Ahiya-qām, is attested in an already published text by Francis Joannès and André Lemaire.¹⁸⁸ A duplicate of the texts provides the date and place of writing: Babylon, 7th of Tishre, 18th year of Darius (I) (506 BCE).¹⁸⁹ Ahiya-qām had five sons who are divided into two groups, probably indicating that they had different mothers and probably indicating that his first two mentioned sons belong to his 'first(-ranking) wife, whereas the three other sons may have been born to Ahiya-qām's second(ary) wife.'¹⁹⁰ Ahiya-qām is probably a non-Yahwistic name¹⁹¹ but his five sons had Yahwistic names.¹⁹² The inheritance left was small, it 'consisted of little more than two slaves and some household utensils,'¹⁹³ and no real estate. Three of the witnesses may have been Babylonians, three are Judahites and the other names are not legible. Legal contracts were witnessed at the city gates where the scribes would have used whoever was entering or

¹⁸⁷ Kathleen Abraham, "Inheritance Division Among Judeans," 206-221.

¹⁸⁸ Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cuneiforms," (p. 18) transliterate the name into French as follows: 'Nêri-Yâma, fils d'Ahi-iâqam.'

¹⁸⁹ In a private correspondence Dr. Kathleen Abraham pointed out that the reconstructed translation on p. 208, line 24, should read: '[(Written) at Babylon,]' The hometown of the Judeans is âl-Yāhūdu.

¹⁹⁰ Kathleen Abraham, "Inheritance Division Among Judeans," 210.

¹⁹¹ Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cuneiforms," 21.

¹⁹² Kathleen Abraham, "Inheritance Division Among Judeans," 211.

¹⁹³ Kathleen Abraham, "Inheritance Division Among Judeans," 211. In relation to the slave with the Yahwistic name, Abraham (p. 212) continues, 'interestingly, one of the slaves owned by Ahiya-qām had a Yahwistic name. We find only very few slaves with Yahwistic names in Babylonia in the Chaldean and Persian periods. The three known examples of such slaves were owned by the queen or the crown-prince. The present example would be the first attestation of a Hebrew slave in a private household in Babylonia. However, it must be borne in mind that the slave of Ahiya-qām may have obtained his Yahwistic name because of the mere fact of having been born in a Judean household rather than by virtue of his ethnic origin. The Jews in Elephantine, for instance, held Egyptian slaves, and if the slave was house-born he could have a Hebrew/Yahwistic name.'

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leaving the city as a potential witness. Thus, the multi-ethnic lists of witnesses attest to the multi-cultural environment that the Judahite diaspora was exposed to in Achaemenid Persia.

Further texts from āl-Yāhūdu and Našar, which were in close proximity to each other, which were published in 2014 by Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch as *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer* (CUSAS28).¹⁹⁴ Thus far, 103 cuneiform tablets have been published, while the remaining are awaiting publication. The documents are significant because they highlight the life of Judeans settled in rural areas (as opposed to the royal entourage in Babylon which is known from the Weidner tablets or the Judean merchants from the Sippar known from the Murašû archive).¹⁹⁵ The tablets span the period from 572 BCE to the ninth year of King Xerxes (477 BCE). The publication of the remaining tablets should lead to further insights into the earlier period of the Judahite diaspora in the Babylonian empire. There are roughly 200 tablets from āl-Yāhūdu, Bīt-Našar and Bīt-Abiram and a variety of other known and previously unknown locations, including Babylon.¹⁹⁶ Pearce concludes that all three vicinities should be located in the Babylon-Borsippa region.¹⁹⁷ The

¹⁹⁴ *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer* (CUSAS28) (ed. Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch; Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 2014).

¹⁹⁵ Caroline Waerzeggers, "Review Article," 180-181.

¹⁹⁶ For further detail see, Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 399-411; Laurie E. Pearce, "'Judean': A Special Status in Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Babylonia?," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 267-277; or Cornelia Wunsch, "Exposure and Appropriation: Judeans in Babylonia and the Babylonian Legal System" (paper presented at the conference: The Judeans in the Achaemenid Age: Negotiating Identity in an International Context, Heidelberg University, 13-16 April 2008).

¹⁹⁷ Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 402 n 10. Her conclusion is based on considerations from the TAYN corpus, and thus based on a wider range of documents than where available to Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cuneiforms," 26, who suggest the Sippar region.

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earliest dated tablet dates to Nebuchadnezzar 33 (572 BCE), only 25 years after the 597 BCE deportation (or 15 years after 587 BCE). At this early stage of the study of the new evidence no final and concluding statements can be made but Pearce feels the following can be said already about the corpus: Two-thirds of the West Semitic names (this is about 15% of all names in the corpus) have some form of a Yahwistic theophoric element. From the 600 identified individuals in the whole corpus, 120 bear Yahwistic names and the majority lives in āl-Yāhūdu.¹⁹⁸ The proportion of Judahites among the total population is higher than the 2.8% identified by Zadok for the Murašû archive in Nippur, which is not surprising as the corpus identifies first generation Judahite deportees and may also include some of the next generation born in Babylonia.¹⁹⁹

Pearce also points out that the TAYN corpus does not include information about the social status or professional status of the deportees or their descendants nor any information about cultic activities.²⁰⁰ The corpus does portray the community, like any other rural Babylonian community, as being mainly involved in agriculture associated with tenant farming, either as farmers or as low-level administrators. Yet some texts, for example, the marriage contract, do offer some further insights into the social and family affairs of the community.²⁰¹ The corpus does enhance the understanding of the diaspora in regard to the economic interaction between Judahites and Babylonian natives in an

¹⁹⁸ Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 404.

¹⁹⁹ Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 78.

²⁰⁰ Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 407.

²⁰¹ See Kathleen Abraham, "West Semitic and Judean Brides in Cuneiform Sources from the Sixth Century BCE: New Evidence from a Marriage Contract from Āl-Yahudu," *AfO* 51 (2005/2006): 198-219. Cornelia Wunsch highlights family affairs (marriage, inheritance, property transfer to a daughter) in āl-Yāhūdu. In one case of a family with a four-generation record of Yahwistic names, was recorded in Babylonian cuneiform by Babylonian scribes according to Babylonian law in the presence of Judean witnesses (Cornelia Wunsch, "Exposure and Appropriation: Judeans in Babylonia and the Babylonian Legal System").

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earlier period than previously known. It adds further Yahwistic personal names to the previous corpus and also provides further material about family naming-patterns in the early exilic period. Moreover, it adds further geographical locations for diaspora settlements.²⁰²

One more document of the TAYN corpus is published separately: ^fNanaya-kānat's marriage contract. The bride has a West-Semitic name, her father is not mentioned, the origin of her mother's name is uncertain. The groom has a Babylonian name but six (of the eight) witnesses bear Yahwistic names and the contract was drafted in āl-Yāhūdu in 534 BCE among West-Semitic immigrants and deportees. The marriage contract is written in good Akkadian and follows the local Babylonian standards and styles. This legal convention is not unique to this marriage contract but is observable from other texts from āl-Yāhūdu.²⁰³ It is also noteworthy that the bride's family was probably poor, as there is no dowry mentioned in the marriage contract. Her father was not present and she was married by her mother. Furthermore, the main Babylonian deities were invoked. Further clarity on these issues is expected from the publication of more texts from the TAYN corpus.

2.7.4. The Murašû Archive

Most of our knowledge of the Judahite diaspora in the Babylonian Achaemenid period derives from the Murašû archive in Nippur. The Murašû archive covers the years 454-404 BCE in late Achaemenid Babylonia, yet most records are concentrated between 440-416 BCE (therefore they are contemporary witnesses to the Aramaic Elephantine texts). The Murašû archive is the archive of a banking house which deals mostly with agricultural contracts and short-term credits.²⁰⁴ Hence, the archive is a private archive and its Akkadian cuneiform texts record the business dealings of different members of the Murašû family and its

²⁰² Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 408.

²⁰³ Kathleen Abraham, "West Semitic and Judean Brides," 206.

²⁰⁴ Matthew W. Stolper, "Fifth Century Nippur: Texts of the Murašûs and from their Surroundings," *JCS* 53 (2001): 83-132.

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subordinates in the Nippur region.²⁰⁵ The main activities are located in the 'traditional hinterland of Nippur, a region with maximum dimensions of c. 100 x 100 km,'²⁰⁶ which included more than 160 settlements. The Murašû firm was mainly involved in local agricultural management, providing services for absent land owners.

The firm leased land and water from their owners, paying out rents and taxes to the owners or to their representatives. The greater part of these properties was sublet in turn to tenants of the firm, usually along with livestock, equipment, and seed. ...In addition, the firm provided a second regular service. The Murašûs made loans to landholders against pledges of real property.²⁰⁷

The Murašû archive can enhance our understanding of the diaspora in two ways: firstly there is the onomastic evidence of the diaspora. Secondly, there is information concerning the social position and name-giving pattern of those involved in business dealings with the Murašû family. Only minimal information can be gleaned regarding the diaspora networks linking Nippur to other regions or to the Yehud.²⁰⁸ The archive provides an insight into only one rural community and its dealings with the Murašûs; it does not provide a systematic map of the spread of the diaspora in Babylonian Achaemenid.

²⁰⁵ It is not clear whether it should be assumed that this diaspora community spoke Akkadian. Michael Coogan points out that on many contracts a short Aramaic ink inscription was found (called dockets or endorsements). These inscriptions were usually brief summaries of the content and also listed the contract partners. In the main these dockets served as filing labels. See Michael Coogan, "Life in the Diaspora," 7. For a detailed discussion on the nature of the Murašû Firm, see Matthew W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire: The Murašû Archive, the Murašû Firm, and Persian Rule in Babylonia* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985), 18-31.

²⁰⁶ Matthew Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 24.

²⁰⁷ Matthew Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire*, 27.

²⁰⁸ Laurie E. Pearce, "New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia," 400.

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In the Murašû archives are 70 names with a Yahwistic theophoric element (either *yahû* or *yaw*).²⁰⁹ Roughly 2.8% of the individuals (out of a total of 2500) have names with a Yahwistic element.²¹⁰ Zadok puts the total number of the Jewish population in the Nippur region at 3%, based on the observation that 50% of the people had a Yahwistic name which is similar to Yehud in the same period (in Elephantine the percentage is lower).²¹¹ The question that remains unanswerable is that of the size of the overall Judahite population in Nippur. It is also important to take account of Judahites who may have had non-Yahwistic names and who are, therefore, difficult to identify as Judahites.²¹² Most of the Yahwistic names found in Nippur are Hebrew. These names are typical of this period and are known from late biblical and post-biblical onomasticon and also from Elephantine.²¹³ Even so, they probably, at least from the second generation in exile, spoke Aramaic.

The genealogies of families in Murašû point to a non-exclusive use of Yahwistic names. Even brothers do not all share a Yahwistic name. The Tōbyaw family tree can serve to illustrate this: Tōbyaw had five children (Banāyaw, Bi-bi-ya, Zabadyaw, Zabīnā and Hananī). Two of his children (Bi-bi-ya, Zabīnā) did not have Yahwistic names, though Zabīnā's child (Ba'lyaw) had a name again with a Yahwistic theophoric element. Four names in the family tree are Yahwistic (all are compound with *yaw*).

²⁰⁹ Michael Coogan points out that though 'it is possible that some Aramaeans or even Babylonians may have adopted these theophorous elements in the names of their children, we do not think it likely. Names in *-yaw* do not occur in Neo-Babylonian sources before the Exile, and their increasing frequency in the late sixth and fifth centuries can reasonably be associated with the gradual emancipation and increased prosperity of Judaeans exiles in Mesopotamia.' See Michael Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names*, 119.

²¹⁰ Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 78.

²¹¹ Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 79. Interestingly, Zadok arrives at his statistical value for Judea based on the list of returnees in Ezra and Nehemiah.

²¹² There are no Yahwistic names (including the patriarchs) in Genesis, see also Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1986), 114.

²¹³ Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 13.

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Hananī is a possibly shortened form of Hananyaw. Zabīnā is an Aramaic name but is also attested as a returnee from the Babylonian *golah* in Ezra 10:43. Bi-bi-ya is an Akkadian name, meaning baby, and is also found among the returnees from Babylon (Ezra 2:11; 8:11; 10:28; Neh 7:16; 10:16).²¹⁴ Both of these names are neutral Babylonian names that do not contain a religious/cultural theophoric element of a Mesopotamian deity.²¹⁵ Coogan observes that the Murašû documents contains Yahwistic names with a Yahwistic patronymic (four times), Yahwistic names with a non-Yahwistic but neutral West Semitic patronymic (nine times), Yahwistic names with patronymics composed of the name of another deity and a West-Semitic non-theophorous element (two times – this is what Coogan calls ‘onomastic syncretism’), Yahwistic names with a Babylonian or non-Semitic patronymic which does not include the name of another deity (eleven times) and Yahwistic names with a Babylonian patronymic which includes the name of another deity (four times).²¹⁶ All of this indicates that the diaspora was aware of religious-cultural distinctions and ethnic differences between them and their host society as names with confusing ethno-religious markers were avoided.

The professions recorded are generally agricultural: sheep and goat herder (Man-dan-yaw, the son of Shulum-babil), date-grower (‘Aqab-yaw, the son Bau-etir), fisherman (Zabad-yaw, the son of Hinni-bel) and those who cultivated the land. Abi-yaw, the son of Shabbatai, cultivated the ‘bow-land.’ ‘This was a type of fief originally granted to military colonists of the Persian Empire who had to provide an archer and/or his equipment to the army in exchange for the grant of land (similar fiefs were called “horse-land”, “chariot-land”, etc.).’²¹⁷ At least two members of the diaspora held higher positions: El-yadin, the son of Yadi’-yaw

²¹⁴ For a discussion of the difference in naming pattern in Muršû, Judah and Elephantine, see Michael D. Coogan, "Patterns in Jewish Personal Names in the Babylonian Diaspora" *JSJ* 4, no. 2 (1973): 183-191. For a discussion of the Tōbyaw family see also Michael Coogan, "Life in the Diaspora," 8.

²¹⁵ Michael Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names*, 120.

²¹⁶ Michael Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names*, 120-121.

²¹⁷ Michael Coogan, "Life in the Diaspora," 10.

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appears as co-creditor for a member of the Murašû firm. The other, Yishrib-yaw, is referred to as the chief officer (*šaknu*) of the serfs of the royal treasury. A few names also indicate the presence of Judahite interpreter-scribes. In conclusion, it is evident that most were involved in agriculture (either as a subleasees or fief-holders), whilst the others were shepherds or fishermen.²¹⁸ The archive records that some (e.g. la-de/di-ia-a-ma) rented several canals and fields for years. Some of the rented canals bore names of Judahites, which might indicate that the former owner rented the canals for a lengthy period.²¹⁹

2.7.5. Other Finds

A further five potential Judahites have been identified. Unfortunately the date and locality are unknown; Zadok presumes that they are from north and central Babylonia.²²⁰ Two further Judahites are identified at Susa, the provincial capital of Elam, ^dla-hu-ú-šarra(LUGAL)-usur(URÙ) son of Šamaš-iddina, who is the fifth witness in a document that belongs to the Babylonian archive of Egibi (494/3 BCE). Both the books of Nehemiah (Neh 1:1) and Esther (Esther 2:5) preserve a memory of Judahites in Susa. The other one is Šá-ab-ba-ta-A+A son of Nabû-šarra-bullit (493/2 BCE).²²¹ Zadok also identifies the following person as Judahite, Ab-da-ia-hu-ú son of Ba-rak-ka-ia-ma, who 'received the *ilku*-tax of the "governor" (*bēl-pihati*).'²²² Lastly a document issued in Hursag-kalamma

²¹⁸ Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 74.

²¹⁹ Ran Zadok assumes that the Bēl-aba-usur Canal is named after a Jew. For the reference to his son the rent-collector, see Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 59, 118. By the canal was a settlement called Ga-lu-tu "exile," which is the Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew *hlḡ* (*galut*), Ran Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia*, 14.

²²⁰ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 45.

²²¹ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 46-47.

²²² Ran Zadok, "The Representation of Foreigners in Neo- and Late-Babylonian Legal Documents (Eighth through Second Centuries B.C.E.)," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 471-589, esp. 514.

(dated 11.XI.469/8 BCE), names I-ú-hu son of Zababa-iddina, a Judahite.²²³

2.7.6. Summary of the Archaeological Evidence

Archaeological evidence of Judahite diaspora communities verifies the overall historical memory of the biblical witness of this period. The findings from āl-Yāhūdu highlight the presence of exiled Judahites in the greater Babylon area and are a witness to the practice of naming the town after its original settlers. The biblical witness highlights the presence of deportees at canals such as when Ezekiel joined the community at the Chebar Canal (Ezek 1:1, 3; 3:15, 23, cf. also Ps 137). The same importance of canals is clear in the evidence collected by Zadok who noted that, among those whose profession is recorded in Babylon, the highest percentage are leasees of fields along canals.²²⁴ The Murašû archive bears witness to the continued settlement of Judahites along the Chebar Canal.²²⁵ The archaeological evidence highlights the continued Judahite settlement of a group of deportees in the Babylonian province over the course of more than a century. The evidence also points to the forced nature of the diaspora settlement as holders of bow fiefs were responsible under the *hatru* system to provide a certain number of equipped soldiers for the imperial administration.

One occupation should receive special notice: the alphabet scribe (*sepīru*). Judahites are proportionally well-represented among this specialist group of scribes.²²⁶ The cuneiform documents were written by scribes of the urban Babylonian elite. Non-Babylonians, mostly Arameans, used instead the alphabet scribe who wrote in Aramaic and on perishable material. From the findings it is clear that the Judahites were

²²³ Ran Zadok, "The Representation of Foreigners," 536.

²²⁴ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 56. The other professions were: holders of bow fiefs, alphabet scribes, fishermen, shepherds, businessmen, royal merchants; *gardu*-workmen; gardener, assistant rent-collector (later then rent-collector) and the man in charge of the king's poultry.

²²⁵ Ran Zadok, *On West Semites in Babylonia*, 14.

²²⁶ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 56.

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concentrated in certain settlements and that these communities were interconnected. Many Judahites are witnesses in legal documents to each other and quite a number worked together to rent fields and canals. Overall the communities show distinct adherence to the general cultural/religious legacy of their Judahite forefathers. Furthermore, they show sensitivity when using names of Babylonian or other foreign cultures, to the degree that compatibility with classical Judahite cultural-religious tradition is ensured.

The evidence for cross-cultural marriages in the Babylonian diaspora is very small. In general this is a phenomena associated with Babylonian cultural non-assimilating tendencies and segregation inside the Babylonian society. The Babylonians did not have the Assyrian attitude or aim of total integration and assimilation of all foreign elements.²²⁷ There is only one *clear* case of a Judahite in Mesopotamia who marries a clearly identifiable non-Judahite.²²⁸ There is always the possibility that a non-Judahite name indicates a foreign partner but without any further evidence this conclusion cannot be drawn. ^fKaššā, daughter A-mu-še-e and ^fGu-da-di-tu (father Judahite, mother probably non-Judahite) married the Babylonian Guzānu son of Kiribtu in 535 BCE. It is also noteworthy, that her father was probably dead, as ^fKaššā was given in marriage by her brother and her mother and it was witnessed by four prominent Judahites. This family seems to be well-integrated in urban Babylonian society and not poor, as her marriage contract includes a dowry.²²⁹ Zadok even suggests that the family must belong to the Babylonian upper class as a marriage between upper class and common people (especially if they are foreigners) is unlikely. The family seems to be well 'accultured (if not assimilated)' judging from the fact that all their four children bear Babylonian names.²³⁰ Zadok is certainly correct when he concludes that for the city of Babylon, and by analogy for every urban metropolis, that there are no cross-cultural links between the upper

²²⁷ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 58.

²²⁸ There is one more example in the Elephantine correspondence (TADAE B2.11), the second husband of Mibtahiah was the Egyptian Eshor, son of Seha.

²²⁹ Kathleen Abraham, "West Semitic and Judean Brides," 208.

²³⁰ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 59.

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class and the commoners. One interesting question thus remains: what about intermarriage in a similar economic environment? Would Judahites take foreign wives who then would be incorporated in the Judahite family?²³¹ More interestingly, would Judahites give their daughters to non-Judahite men and thereby lose a member of their community?

Diaspora names show a high percentage of local variation.²³² In Elephantine 'almost all the names' are Hebrew.²³³ A few names show Aramaic phonological changes which is likely to be due to the Egyptian surroundings. In one case the second husband of a Judahite was Egyptian but their children (or possibly her children from the first marriage?) had names with a theophoric Yahwistic element, namely Mahseiah and Jedaniah (*TADAE* B2.11).²³⁴ The Israelite-Judean names in the Neo- and Late Babylonian documents contain 'many Aramaic/West Semitic (c. 40%), Akkadian (7.5%) and Iranian (2.5%) names.'²³⁵ The percentage of Akkadian names in the upper class might be due to name changes of the exiles by the Babylonian authorities (cf. the Babylonian names of the Davidides: Zerubbabel, Shesbazzar). For Nippurean Judahites the observation must be made that none had a typical Akkadian Nippurean name (for example, a name that contained the theophoric elements *Enlil* or

²³¹ Karel van der Toorn raises the point that 'a girl who married had to make a religious transfer.' See Karel van der Toorn, "Migration and the Spread of Local Cults," 366.

²³² At this stage the evidence is mainly based on a comparison between Elephantine and the Murašû archive (plus Neo/Late Babylonian documents). The publication of the remaining cuneiform tablets from āl-Yāhūdu and Našar material is eagerly awaited, as it will hopefully provide further insights.

²³³ Ran Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite*, 18. Aramaic was *lingua franca* in Achaemenian Egypt but the community might have its origin in the time before the rise of Aramaic in Palestine. Yet Zadok points out that the Aramaic documents from Elephantine contain several Hebrew expressions.

²³⁴ Mibtahiah's second husband was the Egyptian Eshor, son of Seha (*TADAE* B2.6).

²³⁵ Ran Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite*, 18.

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Ninurta); thus, there was no cultural influence from the *Enlil* temple in Nippur.²³⁶

With regard to Elephantine, the community there seems to be being culturally more conservative. In relation to papponymy (grandsons named after their grandfathers). Zadok points out that papponymy is not known among the Israelites, it is documented only for the post-exilic period. This practice is known from Elephantine where there are 'many instances' of it. Zadok suggests this might be due to what he calls 'onomastic isolation'.²³⁷

The archaeological evidence thus far presents a picture of mostly agricultural communities, spread in and around wider Babylon. Life seems to have continued in the 'normal' uninterrupted style of agricultural communities: sons follow their fathers and continue to work the land. Exiled soldiers were conscripted into the imperial army and stationed in garrisons throughout the empire. Some became low ranking officials, others engaged in commerce, a few others became scribes, and a very few rose higher in the system, like Gadalâma, son of Banna-Ea. Overall the evidence from âl-Yāhūdu, the Murašû archive and Elephantine points to an economically well-integrated community, that flourished based on the economic possibilities of the period and also a tolerant and non-discriminatory attitude that characterises the Achaemenid period.²³⁸

²³⁶ Ran Zadok highlights the fact that the *Enlil* temple did not seem to have culturally influenced any of the tribal groups near Nippur, with the rare exception of the Gambuleans. See Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia*, 86.

²³⁷ Ran Zadok, *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite*, 15. If this suggestion proves to be true, this would be another indication about the conservative cultural nature of the Elephantine diaspora.

²³⁸ Michael Coogan, "Life in the Diaspora," 9-10.

Chapter 3:

Theological Re-formulations in the *Golah*

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will address the issue of theological re-formulations of historical events and concepts as part of the theologizing of the *golah*. Firstly, it will examine the *golah* presentation of the theme of 'the empty-land.' Secondly, it will look at the presentation of the overall biblical trope of exile in the Hebrew Bible.¹ Thirdly, it will comment on the question of return from exile and the *golah's* homeland missions. This is followed by a discussion of the scholarship with regard to the *golah*-redactions both in Jeremiah and in Ezekiel. This study and the evidence cited here is *not* interested in the question of the historicity of events but rather in the theological re-telling and narration of these events within literary works. This study does not address the question of historical probability and reality. For example, the question whether, Cyrus' edict in Ezra 1 is historically reliable or not is not discussed. The focus is rather on the re-telling of the Cyrus event within the narrative and its subsequent place in the theology of the *golah* community.

One widely held assumption is that exilic dislocation and return left an unmistakable theological imprint on the biblical texts. For example, Martin G. Klingbeil suggests viewing the motif of exile as at least a governing theme in the Hebrew Bible if not the Leitmotiv.² David Clines describes the Pentateuch, in essence, as 'the self-expression of exiles,'³ and for Joseph Blenkinsopp the interpretation of the themes of exile and return, near extinction and survival, is in the literary composition of central importance.⁴

¹ See Carolyn J Sharp, "The Trope of 'Exile' and the Displacement of Old Testament Theology," *PRSt* 31, no. 2 (2004): 153-169.

² Martin G. Klingbeil, "Exile," *DOTP*:248.

³ David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (JSOTSup 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 104.

⁴ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 108.

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The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 586 BCE. This event marks a political, social and religious catastrophe for Judah, yet it is also the beginning of the development of the powerful ideological concept of exile (as reconstructed in scholarly circles). Yet the emphasis on the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple draws attention away from the fact that the *golah* community had already established itself in the environment of Babylon following the 597 deportation. It is the exile in 597 BCE of a small but theologically influential group of Judahites that brought about the construction of the exile as the central turning point for their history and the history of their nation.⁵ The destruction of the temple, the end of the monarchy, the tragedy that befell the people in Yehud and the deportations are narrated in the Hebrew Bible in terms of YHWH's punishment for Judah's unfaithfulness to the divine commandments. The unfaithfulness of the people is contrasted with the love, forgiveness and faithfulness of YHWH that will end the exile and bring his people back to the land. In this understanding, exile is a time of re-focusing on YHWH and of purification. The exile is primarily a theological construct, especially as its interpretation is exclusively associated with the 597 BCE deportees.

The Hebrew Bible contains historiographical information and accounts from two centres. One has its origin in, and focus on, the land of Palestine. These are accounts from the perspective of nation, issues of survival, wars, crises, international and national politics. This perspective is straightforward in its interpretation to most readers who are from an ethnically coherent nation state and who carry a sense of national (and/or monarchic) history. The other centre is represented by texts that originated in a minority setting in a foreign land and address questions of national survival under foreign rule and the issue of winning over the foreign royal administration as benefactors for the

⁵ This re-appreciation finds its climax in the appreciation of the theological term 'Israel' for the Judean remnant; see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Inclusion in and Exclusion from Israel as Conveyed by the Use of the Term 'Israel' in Post-Monarchic Biblical Texts," in *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (ed. Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy; JSOTSup 190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 95-149, esp. 121.

Judahite cause. These diaspora texts, as I will call them, carry a trans-national (universal) sense that does not require a nation state for survival.

3.2. The Presentation of the Motif of the Empty Land

The term 'myth of the empty land' was coined by the late Robert P. Carroll in a study that examines the empty land motif based on 2 Chronicles 36 and the corresponding references in 2 Kings and Jeremiah. This myth contains four elements: polluted land, deportation, restoration and purification.⁶ Alongside the former is another important myth, which plays a key role, namely the parallel myth of 'a land polluted by its Canaanite inhabitants.'⁷ This is especially evident in the polemic against those (purified) returnees who married into the (polluted) people of the land, who are described as Canaanites and Egyptians (Ezra 9:1-2). The origin of the myth is credited to the Babylonian *golah*, who are the solemn benefactors of this myth. Carroll describes the overall ideological aim of the myth as a control of membership in the new community in post-exilic Yehud, over and above those who remained in the land. In order to locate the myth historically he builds substantially on this supposed tension between the *golah* and the poorest people left in the land. Carroll also sees one ideological unified myth without variations, which originated in the Babylonian *golah*.

Empty land theology indicates that the land was completely empty during the exile. 'The myth of the empty land' stands for a view that holds that a majority of people remained in the land and were not deported and that the biblical descriptions are not history but theology. In 1996 Hans M. Barstad published a study on 'the myth of the empty land' that re-examined the biblical claims of a completely depopulated Judah

⁶ Robert P. Carroll, "The Myth of the Empty Land," *Semeia* 59 (1992): 79-93, here 84.

⁷ Robert P. Carroll, "Myth of the Empty Land," 79. A similar idea is found in Deuteronomy where the rejection of the Canaanite 'others' leads to Israel entering an empty land. See J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power* (LHBOTS 454; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 14.

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shortly after the exile of 587 BCE (2 Chr 36:20-21; 2 Kgs 25:11, Jer 52:15).⁸ Barstad tests this view, or better this theological conviction, firstly in relation to biblical texts which mentioned that people did remain in Yehud (cf. 2 Kgs 25:12, Ezra-Nehemiah). Secondly, he surveys the archaeological evidence from Yehud and the surrounding provinces from the Babylonian period. He concludes that the so-called 'myth of the empty land' is primarily a theological construct.⁹ What emerges afterwards as a historical consensus is that the exile of 587 BCE had a disruptive and emptying effect on Jerusalem and its vicinities. Nevertheless, life inside Yehud continued but on a smaller scale. The lack of the historicity of the so-called 'myth of the empty land' is widely realized, yet the motif still features in the question of dating biblical texts in the restoration period. Certainly the theology behind the presentation of an empty land should not be excluded from current discussions of the exilic period because of its lack of historicity. Rather, it provides important insights into the overall theological outlook and theologizing of those who were faced with coming to terms with exile. This opens the door for the appreciation and re-assessment of its theological, symbolic message.¹⁰

⁸ Potentially the view that the Northern Kingdom was first depopulated and then repopulated by syncretistic foreigners (2 Kgs 17:6; 2 Kgs 18:11) might also be connected to the theological idea of 'an empty land' - a conviction that ensures the primacy of the only and exclusive remnant of Israel and Judah - in Babylon.

⁹ Hans M. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: a Study of the History and Archaeology of Judah during the 'Exilic' Period* (SO Fasc. Suppl. 28; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), 81. See also Robert P. Carroll, "Myth of the Empty Land," to whom Barstad pays tribute.

¹⁰ Philip Davies goes so far as to question the presence of any organised deported Judean community in Babylon at all. This is built on the assumption that the 'exile' did not have a great disruptive impact on life in Yehud, that there is no need for a preservation of biblical traditions in Babylon, that it is improbable that scrolls were taken into captivity by the Judean prisoners of war, and that there is no evidence that the deportees were settled together and could form a thriving community. See Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (JSOTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 41-42. This

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This study aims to examine the biblical presentation of the 'myth of the empty land.'¹¹ Notably, the unavoidable shortcoming of Carroll's study is that he did not investigate the empty land motif throughout the Hebrew Bible but rather, limited his investigation (and thus his findings) to selected passages. This study is primarily interested in the presentation of the emptiness motif in Chronicles, 2 Kings and Jeremiah and in the difference between the accounts.¹² The second question asked is whether the motif is an exclusive *golah* motif that addresses the tension in post-exilic Yehud.

The end of exile is traditionally dated to the year 538 BCE and this interpretation is based on the Chronicler's presentation of the exile as a historically limited period of seventy years (cf. Jer 29:10).¹³ In 2 Chr 36:20-21 the following interpretation (not a historical description) of the exile is given:

He [Nebuchadnezzar] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to

study will also address some of the issues raised by Davies and revisit both biblical and extra-biblical evidence. The criticism brought forward by Davies, among others, seems like an overreaction to the discovery that the 'historical' biblical exilic presentation is ideological/theological in nature and favours 'exclusively' the 597 *golah*, disregarding all other Judean/Israelite communities.

¹¹ For criticisms of the myth of the empty land, see Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 45-49; Bustenay Oded, "Where is the 'Myth of the Empty Land' to be found? History versus Myth," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 55-74; Diana Edelman, "The 'Empty Land' as a Motif in City Laments," in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography: l'historiographie biblique, ancienne et moderne* (ed. George J. Brooke and Thomas Römer; BETL 207; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 127-149, esp. 143-149; Louis Jonker, "The Exile as Sabbath Rest: The Chronicler's Interpretation of the Exile," in *Exile and Suffering* (ed. Bob Becking and Dirk Human; OtSt 50; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 213-229.

¹² See also Zech 7:14 and the numerous references to a desolate land in Ezekiel.

¹³ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 12.

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fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.

In this interpretation the land was completely emptied of its inhabitants (an empty land) and was re-populated by returning exiles (the *golah* – members of the Babylonian diaspora who were resettled in Yehud). In his interpretation, the Chronicler ultimately agrees with the interpretation of the exilic and early restoration period as found in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra further develops the theme of continuity between the ‘true Israel’ in the *golah* and the ‘restoration return’ through the motif of the return of the undamaged¹⁴ temple vessels (Ezra 1:7-11; 5:14-15; 6:5 based on 2 Chr 36:7, 10, 18).¹⁵

The ‘myth of the empty land’ is generally based on the presentation of the material in Chronicles and it interprets the views of the Chronicler as accurate historical descriptions. The Pentateuchal background to this theology finds its key expression in Lev 26:33-35.¹⁶ The same passage also presents the possibility that those exiled repent and return to YHWH (Lev 26:40-42). Nevertheless, the changing of hearts does not climax in the shortening of the exile; the exile will only end when the Sabbath rest for the land is fulfilled (Lev 26:43), an idea that is also expressed in 2 Chronicles 36:21. The empty land is linked to the idea of exile as punishment for disobeying YHWH’s voice and to the idea that this exilic punishment creates a new reformed remnant outside the land.

The empty land motif in Chronicles gives prominence to the only surviving community (‘those who had escaped from the sword’) and envisions a restoration based on them. The account in Chronicles does not specify that some Judahites were initially left behind, as does 2 Kgs 25:11, Jer 39:10 and 52:16. Chronicles focuses instead, in retrospective, on the

¹⁴ 2 Kings 24:13 makes the point that all temple vessels were destroyed by the Babylonians.

¹⁵ For a good discussion of the theologically constructed equation that ‘exiled Israel equals Israel;’ see Ehud Ben Zvi, “Inclusion in and Exclusion,” 104.

¹⁶ John E. Hartley points out the close proximity between Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel; see John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (WBC 4; Dallas: Word Books, 1992), 459-460.

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inclusive notion that all surviving Judahites can be part of the restoration community. The empty land motif in Jeremiah is different as it actively rejects all other Judahite communities except the 597 deportation. This rejection also includes the 587 deportation and the communities in Yehud. Every Judahite who is left in the land is described as fleeing to Egypt in disobedience to the prophet's divine council. Subsequently, they are viewed as rejected people (Jeremiah 24) and prominence is given instead to the 597 *golah*. Both empty land presentations agree that continuity lies with the *golah*. In Chronicles all survivors are included in the (undefined) *golah*, whilst the *golah* of the book of Jeremiah includes only the 597 deportees.

A variation of the empty land motif is also found in 2 Kings and Jeremiah, where the land is initially depicted as emptied, not of all but of a substantial element of its population.¹⁷ In all these passages only the poorest strata of society remains: 2 Kgs 24:14; 25:11-12; Jer 39:10; 40:7 and 52:15-16.¹⁸ These passages do not focus on those who remained but rather on the claim that the leadership of society and temple, in the words of 2 Kgs 24:14 'all Jerusalem,' were carried away (cf. 2 Kgs 25:11). The final indications of the 'empty land motif' come in both 2 Kings and Jeremiah when *all* the people who remained after the initial deportations voluntarily remove themselves from the land (2 Kings 25:26; Jer 43:5-6), thus, portraying the land as completely emptied of all people.

The complete emptying of the land due to the flight of the population is further developed in Jeremiah 40-43, in which all the people left in the land abandon the land, thus voluntarily emptying the land and disqualifying themselves from future restoration. Jeremiah 40:11

¹⁷ For a broader treatment of the motif of the empty land, both in biblical references to non-Judean cities or regions and its special covenantal role in Israel, see Diana Edelman, "'Empty Land' as a Motif in City Laments," 138-140.

¹⁸ Even Lam 1:3 expresses the belief that, 'Judah went into exile.' This is surprising as the book of Lamentations is usually thought to have been composed in Judah. However, Diana Edelman's suggestion that Lamentations is influenced by Mesopotamian lamentation literature and was written by returnees for the rededication of the temple in 515 BCE has merit. For a full discussion, see Diana Edelman, "'Empty Land' as a Motif in City Laments," 128.

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narrates the complete ingathering and return of *all* Judahite refugees from Moab, Ammon, Edom and all other lands. Subsequently, these returnees are included in the remnant community in Yehud. Naturally, the remnant is those who are left in a community after calamity strikes and so the remnant is expected to be in Jerusalem and Yehud.¹⁹ It is important to note that in the book of Jeremiah the *whole* population left in Yehud leaves for Egypt (Jeremiah 42), re-enforcing the idea that no remnant community is left in Yehud. Jeremiah 44:7 makes the point that the disobedience of the remnant in leaving for Egypt excludes them from being the remnant or having any part in it.²⁰ Jeremiah 44 also expresses the view that the Egyptian diaspora worshipped other gods and this is a reason why they are not considered for covenantal restoration. The only community that is left, and which exemplified obedience, is the 597 *golah* in Babylon. Jeremiah's version of the empty land exclusively supports the election of the 597 *golah*, after all other groups are excluded one by one.²¹

Distinct differences in the use and presentation of the empty land motif are evident in Jeremiah, 2 Kings and Chronicles. Jeremiah portrays the land as emptied, the Egyptian diaspora and the 587 deportation as rejected and restoration exclusively as coming from the 597 *golah*. 2 Kings has an open attitude, which recalls that all Judahites left in the land fled to Egypt after Gedaliah's murder but their disobedience to a

¹⁹ Some biblical accounts describe the population in Yehud following the 597 deportation as the remnant: Jer 40:11, 15; 42:2, 15, 19; 43:5; 44:7, 12, 14, 28; Ezek 9:8; 11:13; Neh 1:2.

²⁰ For a discussion as to whether the interpretation of 'all' and 'everyone' in relation to consecutive deportations from Judah should only indicate a 'large group' but not the totality of people; see Hans Barstad, *Myth of the Empty Land*, 30-31.

²¹ The same view about the preservation of the remnant in Babylon is found, not surprisingly, in a book that narrates 'the' return from Babylon, namely, Haggai. In Haggai three times the return is narrated as compromising 'all the remnant of the people,' (Hag 1:12, 14 and 2:2) under the leadership of Zerubbabel. The book of Ezra uses the remnant idea only in Ezra 9 when discussing the intermarriage problem and warning that disobedience will lead to the destruction of the remnant.

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divine word through Jeremiah is not recalled. The land is empty and the focus shifts to Babylon and the fate and ultimate death of Jehoiachin there. The question of restoration and its agent is not addressed at all. Chronicles expresses an all-encompassing view of inclusion of all surviving Judahite wherever they are in the restoration. The link between pollution (the priestly concern for sin) and deportation is not made explicit (but compare Ezek 33:24-29). 2 Kings 24:3-4, in narrating the reign of King Jehoiakim, provides evidence of such an idea. It links sin with removal from the land but through death rather than deportation (it is also not explicitly linked in Lev 26:33-34²²). 2 Kings 24 and 25 do not carry the motif of restoration. 2 Chronicles 36 does carry the motif of restoration to the land but does not link it with purification. Only in the book of Jeremiah is there a link between the idea of restoration and future purification (of purified people Jer 24:6-7). However, it remains unclear in Carroll's article if the purification of the land is achieved through the rest of the emptied land, through the return of a purified community, or through the building of the temple and the re-inauguration of cultic service. At this stage it is enough to highlight these differences in the presentation and understanding of the empty land motif in the books, Jeremiah, 2 Kings and Chronicles. This points to the conclusion that an empty land motif is utilised but that there was not one universal understanding of it. Instead, different understandings of a general motif were used to underline differing theological points.

Diana Edelman makes a number of significant observations with regard to the empty land motif.²³ First, she observes that the motif of the entire destruction of cities and their main temples, followed by subsequent rejoicing in their rebuilding, has a long tradition in Mesopotamian literature. Rightfully, she asks if a similar motif might not have a corresponding native Judahite tradition, as the destruction and rebuilding of cities was a by-product of warfare. Secondly, she establishes that the destruction of cities and whole regions results in them being 'uninhabitable and

²² Diana Edelman, "'Empty Land' as a Motif in City Laments," 144-147.

²³ See the important article that addresses the empty land motif not from an archaeological standpoint but more importantly from a theological one; see Diana Edelman, "'Empty Land' as a Motif in City Laments," 127-142.

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emptied of life.’ This motif is frequently employed by biblical writers. Thirdly, she points out that the empty-land motif is used in ANE treaties, which correspond in biblical terms to covenant theology (cf. Lev 26:27, 31-33; Deut 28:63). Thus, there is no need to view the empty land motif as a unique ideologically-laden expression of the Babylonian *golah* community; rather it seems to be a widely used symbolic motif, which is part of the wider cultural Near-Eastern background.

Carroll claims that the empty land motif addresses the tension between the *golah* and the people of the land.²⁴ Carroll builds a substantial part of his argument on the idea that the fate of the poorest strata left in the land after 587 BCE was not recorded in 2 Kings and Jeremiah and that for the Chronicler, these people did not exist at all.²⁵ He makes the statement that the poorest in the land simply did not count for the

²⁴ Joseph Blenkinsopp suggests an economic reason, the ‘questions of legal ownership of real estate,’ for the tension between returnees and the people of the Yehud; see Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Bible, Archaeology and Politics; or the Empty Land Revisited," *JSOT* 27, no. 2 (2002): 169-187, esp. 177. It seems highly unlikely that in the context of imperial Persian landownership, a tension over land rights could have a disrupting effect on Yehud to such a degree that it was deemed necessarily to address the issue religiously. It is more likely that the Persian administration would have dealt swiftly with those who opposed their policies. For a criticism of a conflict over land rights; see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Inclusion in and Exclusion," 104-113; Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 160.

For an illuminating study of the difficulty of the acceptance of returnees, see Armine Ishkanian, "Home-Coming and Goings," *Diaspora* 13, no. 1 (2004): 111-121. In light of Ishkanian’s article, the tension between the returnees and remainees (with the added religious ‘exile-equals-punishment-theology’) might shed further light on the restoration community. From Ezra and Nehemiah, the voice and the struggle of the returnees is known, for the voice of the remainees; see Jakob Wöhrle, "'No Future for the Proud Exultant Ones' The Exilic Book of the Four Prophets (Hos., Am., Mic., Zeph.) as a Concept Opposed to the Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 58, no. 4/5 (2008): 608-627, who has conceptualised that they are the “true remnant of Judah.” Also Yigal Levin, "From Lists to History: Chronological Aspects of the Chronicler's Genealogies," *JBL* 123, no. 4 (2004): 601-636, esp. 604.

²⁵ Robert P. Carroll, "Myth of the Empty Land," 81, 84.

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writer.²⁶ His attempt to build tension in the restoration period between the poorest in the land, who did not leave, and the returning *golah*, weakens his overall presentation of the empty land motif. The basic problem with Carroll's reconstruction is that both 2 Kings and Jeremiah make the explicit point that after Gedaliah's assassination *all* people who are left in the land flee (2 Kgs 25:26; Jer 43:5-6). Afterwards the land is completely empty. All accounts in Chronicles, 2 Kings and Jeremiah agree that the land is entirely emptied. 2 Kings and Chronicles describe an unspecified restoration that has the potential of being inclusive of all Judahites. It is only in Jeremiah that the election of the 597 *golah* plays an exclusive role in the future restoration. It seems fair to conclude that 2 Kings and Chronicles use a general and widely known empty-land motif, whilst in Jeremiah it is broadened to include the exclusive election of the 597 *golah*.

Unfortunately, Carroll merged two different aspects of reality. These are the theological narrative presentation of the empty land and the historical (archaeologically verifiable) reconstructions of an exilic population in Yehud. Carroll's aim was to extract a biblical image, namely the empty land motif, from selected passages in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, the mixing of the two kinds of realities (the theological interpretation and the archaeological reality) does not provide a biblical motif but only a scholarly reconstruction that assumes that tension must have existed in post-exilic Yehud. The silence concerning the reconstructed tension in the restoration period might not be a reflection of an ideological silencing but rather a reflection of the reality of a Persian-initiated colonial reorganisation.²⁷ First, Carroll denies that after Gedaliah's assassination everyone left the land, yet the *textual* presentation of the events claim this and the typified empty-land motif requires it. Secondly, he envisions a (historical) tension over land rights and leadership in the community between the returnees and those who never left. However, this ignores the presentations of the early restoration period as

²⁶ Robert P. Carroll, "Myth of the Empty Land," 80.

²⁷ For a summary description of the imperial control mechanism of the Persian empire; see Kyung-jin Min, *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah* (JSOTSup 409; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 92-94.

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described in Ezra and Nehemiah. Either the arguments follow a historical reconstruction, in which the returnees encounter people in the land and they are given imperial land from the Achaemenid administration, resulting in no tension over land rights, or the arguments follow the internal biblical presentation where no tensions over land rights are recorded in Yehud.²⁸ The result of Carroll mixing the two realities is that the returnees are immediately portrayed as negative because they ignore and actively exclude those who remained in the land. In the reality of the text, the returnees cannot ignore and exclude anybody because there is no one (in the narrative reality) in the land. The returnees' overall aim is to populate Yehud after the calamity of the exile and no one is excluded from participating in this project.

The reconstruction of tension in the post-exilic Yehud relies heavily on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Carroll expresses the basic aim of the *golah* returnees as the 'establishment of the hegemony of the deportees over the peoples of the land.'²⁹ The evidence for this is the unwillingness of the returnees to be assisted in the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 4:2) and the exclusion from their community of the people of the land (who are, according to Carroll, those who remained) in Ezra 10 and Neh 13:23-27. In all three cases, the biblical evidence points in a different direction. Ezra 4:2 refers to non-Yehudian Samaritans. Nehemiah 13 deals with actual foreigners and Ezra 10 is a conflict of members inside the returned *golah* community. Furthermore, the community of the returnees is provided with indigenous political backing (Zerubbabel), indigenous religious temple-orientated backing (Joshua the high priest) and, more importantly they are sent by the central imperial government. The question unanswered in Carroll's reconstruction is who really could, over a long period of time, oppose these forces to such a degree that the memory of the conflict found its way into the Hebrew Bible?

Carroll assumes that Ezra-Nehemiah supports the exclusive *golah* theology of Jeremiah's 597 deportation. Unfortunately, he does not

²⁸ The arguments for the re-constructed struggle over land rights come from the claim in Ezra 2:70 and Neh 7:73 that the returnees settled in their respective cities.

²⁹ Robert P. Carroll, "Myth of the Empty Land," 81.

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present evidence for this and neither Ezra nor Nehemiah vocalise such a theology. Cyrus' return decree calls on 'each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns' (Ezra 1:4). The association with the *golah* is through the geographical description of initial settlement area of the *golah* in lbb (*Babel* - the ESV rightly translates it as Babylonia in Ezra 1:11, cf. Ezra 6:1-2 where Babylonia includes Ecbatana in the province of Media). Ezra gathers deportees from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addan and Immer (Ezra 2:59) and Levites from Casiphia (Ezra 8:5), describing scattered Judahite settlements that are likely to be located in the vicinity of Babylon. Nehemiah is from Susa in Elam and he is not linked in the texts in any way to the Babylonian *golah* community. In fact, all evidence so far points in the direction of a theology associated with the more inclusive diaspora. The exclusive link to the 597 deportation is often made through the association with King Jehoiachin (Jer 24:1-2) but Zerubbabel is never linked to the deportation of his grandfather in 597 BCE. All genealogical references of Zerubbabel in Ezra-Nehemiah (also in Haggai and Zechariah) are to his father Shealtiel. Carroll relied too heavily on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah for his historical reconstruction of the tension in post-exilic Yehud. The books of Haggai and Zechariah do not report the tension between returnees and those who remained.

3.3. The Presentation of Return from Exile

This section investigates the biblical presentation of return from Babylon in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah and the related question of whether 539 BCE marks the end of the exile. The attitude of Ezra-Nehemiah is investigated in light of the suggested presentation of the return as the second exodus and also in light of the suggested consecutive homeland missions of the *golah*.

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The situation in Yehud in the restoration period is commonly based on the biblical witnesses and the accounts in the book of Ezra.³⁰ The historical reconstruction holds that the imperial administration returns a group of Judahites from their Babylonian exile to Yehud, where the returnees rebuilt the devastated cities and the temple of YHWH. However, this section is not interested in independent-verifiable historical reconstructions of events in the restoration period but rather in the theological presentation of these events, especially in the book of Ezra.

Jerusalem and Judah were conquered in 587 BCE and a deportation of parts of the population followed - the Babylonian captivity. The Babylonian empire fell to the Persians in 539 BCE and under Cyrus' edict of restoration (538 BCE) the temple in Jerusalem was, according to the biblical record, to be restored out of the funds of the royal treasury (Ezra 1:2-4 and 6:3-5). Cyrus further permitted those who wished to return to their ancestral homeland to do so.

Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:5)

Did the *golah* in Babylon view Cyrus' decree as constituting *the* restoration return?³¹ Or did the *return* under Ezra mark the end of the diaspora existence? One proposed solution is that Cyrus' decree constitutes *the* restoration return.³² Yet this view does not take into account the

³⁰ The biblical record is silent about the end of Ezra's life. It is unknown whether he stayed in Yehud or returned to Babylon. According to folk tradition, Ezra died in Mesopotamia at the age of 120 in a town now called Uzair.

³¹ Michael A. Knibb concludes his research on exile in the intertestamental period by observing that for most writers the nation was still in exile; an exile that would only end when YHWH intervenes and establishes his rule; see Michael A. Knibb, "The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period," *HeyJ* 17 (1976): 253-272, esp. 271-272.

³² For a good introduction to recent research into the diaspora-homeland relation with reference to the return motif in Zechariah 1-8; see John Kessler, "Diaspora and Homeland in the Early Achaemenid Period: Community, Geography and Demography in Zechariah 1-8," in *Approaching Yehud: New*

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lengthy process of return as described in Ezra-Nehemiah.³³ Furthermore, it misreads Cyrus' decree as a call for national restoration, despite the fact that Cyrus' decree is primarily about temple restoration,³⁴ rather than national restoration.³⁵ The book of Ezra describes the first and most important prerequisite for the fulfilment of Jeremiah's 70-year-exile prophecy as the return of the exiled temple vessels (Ezra 1:7-11) and not the restoration of a Judahite kingdom.³⁶ Several kings of

Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period (ed. Jon L. Berquist; SemeiaSt 50; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 137-166.

³³ For the possibility that Ezra 1:1 and its references to the fulfilled prophecies of Jeremiah should only be read as a judgment on Babylon and not as promising full national restoration; see H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985), 9.

³⁴ Terence E. Fretheim, for example, suggests that the priestly writers called for a return to the theocratic age, a time prior to kingship and the temple; see Terence E. Fretheim, "The Priestly Document: Anti-Temple?," *VT* 18, no. 3 (1968): 313-329, esp. 315-316.

³⁵ Amélie Kuhrt also observed that the Cyrus Cylinder does not refer to a general return; see Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *JSOT* 25 (1983): 83-97, esp. 87. See also Gösta W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSup 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 816. Sara Japhet points out that 'the return is not an end in itself; it is a means to the rebuilding of the temple.' See Sara Japhet, "The Temple in the Restoration Period: Reality and Ideology," in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 198; repr. from *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 44 (1991). Melody Knowles argues that the returns in Ezra are best described as pilgrimages; see Melody D Knowles, *Centrality Practiced: Jerusalem in the Religious Practice of Yehud and the Diaspora during the Persian Period* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 85. Zechariah 6:9 also reports the arrival of pilgrims from the diaspora with money for the temple service; see J. Alberto Soggin, "Diaspora im Alten Testament," *DEVD* 52 (1982): 64-75, esp. 68.

³⁶ Lisbeth S. Fried suggests that the initiative to rebuild the temple depended on the 'tangible visible proof of YHWH's presence' and his expressed wish to return. In Ezra 1 the temple vessels fulfil this function; see Lisbeth S. Fried, "The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient Near East," in

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Tyre, most probably during the reign of Nabonidus, were re-installed in their homeland;³⁷ therefore, the return motif is no unique historical precedent.³⁸ Becking notes that when Ezra travels to Jerusalem in Ezra 7-10, the verbs used are from the semantic field 'to come; to come up' and not from the field 'to return.'³⁹ This suggests that even Ezra's coming is not presented by its redactor as signalling the end of exile.⁴⁰

The book of Ezra does not portray the initial return in 538 BCE as *the* restoration or as the end of the captivity or exile. As Smith-Christopher remarks, 'part of the myth of Persian benevolence is the idea of an end to the exile in 539.'⁴¹ However, 539 BCE only marks the shift from Babylonian to Persian domination. Ezra points out that the Judeans under Persian rule were still slaves in their land (Neh 9:36) and a heavy taxation continued to encumber the people. The post-exilic book of Daniel reinterprets Jeremiah's prophecy to predict the end of exile not

Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 21-54, esp. 51.

³⁷ See Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 110, who notes the return of Baalezer as king of Tyre and also the return of two of his successors (Maharbaal and Hiram). Also Rainer Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; STAR 5; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 1-17, esp. 5-6.

³⁸ Klaus Bringmann lists a further three returnee communities between 369 and 321 BCE. In 369 BCE the Messene population returned to their homeland after 100 years in exile. Refugees from Haran waited 54 years before they were allowed to return. 321 BCE deportees from Samia were decreed to return after 40 years of exile. See Klaus Bringmann, *Geschichte der Juden im Altertum*, 23. For a potential return of Tyrian deportees, see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 61.

³⁹ Bob Becking, "Ezra's Re-enactment of the Exile," in *Leading Captivity Captive* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 278 / ESHM 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 40-61, esp. 57.

⁴⁰ This is similar to Peter Bedford's reading of Ezra-Nehemiah as *golah*-initiated homeland missions, not returns, see Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 151.

⁴¹ Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 65. See also Martien Alexandra Halvorson-Taylor, "The Development of Exile as Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2006), 3-10.

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after 70 years but after 490 years. This indicates that for the writer, the people were still in exile during his time.⁴² Thus, 538 marks only the beginning of the restoration period but not *the* restoration and not the end of exile. Carroll notes that the idea of a well-defined period of exile with a definite beginning and a similarly definite end comes from the Chronicler.⁴³ 1 Chronicles 26 also contains a reference to the ongoing exile of the two and a half tribes that settled east of the Jordan, an exile that still continued in the time of the writer. Thus, no literature contemporary to the restoration period makes the claim that the exile had ended; only the later work of the Chronicler reinterprets the past in such a fashion.

The re-appreciation of the motif of a new exodus or a second exodus is repeatedly highlighted in relation to the return motif in the book of Ezra.⁴⁴ However, the book of Ezra contains two imperial return decrees

⁴² See also Daniel 9. See John Hill, "'Your Exile will be Long': The Book of Jeremiah and the Unended Exile," in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence* (ed. Martin Kessler; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 149-161, 159-161 of which is an abbreviated essay of his work, *Friend or Foe? The Figure of Babylon in the Book of Jeremiah MT* (Biblical Interpretation 40; Leiden: Brill, 1999); Daniel Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 65; Michael Knibb, "The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period," 253-272, and the articles in James M. Scott, ed., *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions* (JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997). Another example could be Gen 15:13-15, which contains an oracle prophesying a lengthy stay in exile. The account predicts a period of 400 years and promises liberation and return in the fourth generation (this is similar to Jer 27:7). The former could be a re-interpretation of the latter, since the fourth generation did not experience the exodus liberation as expected.

⁴³ For a discussion of this idea and further literature, see Robert P. Carroll, "Exile! What Exile?," 64-65.

⁴⁴ Klaus Koch, "Ezra and the Origins of Judaism," *JSS* 19, no. 2 (1974): 173-197; Peter R. Ackroyd, "The Biblical Portrayal of Achaemenid Rulers," in *Achaemenid History V: The Roots of the European Tradition* (ed. Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Jan Willem Drijvers; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 1-16, esp. 15; H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*; H. G. M. Williamson, "The Torah and History in Presentations of Restoration in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*

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and two major returns, one under Zerubbabel and one under Ezra. In particular, the question should be asked as to whether the book of Ezra portrays the first return under Zerubbabel similarly to the second-exodus motif, as H.G.M. Williamson argues.⁴⁵ The second-exodus motif is a broad concept that covers a variety of scenarios and biblical allusions to it can be found that correspond very closely to the initial exodus.⁴⁶ Klaus Koch only discusses the second-return decree in Ezra 7-8 as a second-exodus but does not describe it as *the* second-exodus. Koch suggests that 'Ezra's march from Babylon to Jerusalem was a cultic procession which Ezra understood as a second Exodus and a partial fulfilment of the prophetic expectations.'⁴⁷ Furthermore, there is also the question of the degree of correspondence between the textual characteristics of the exodus event (liberation, wilderness, conquest) and its re-appreciation or even modification in the prophetic literature and also in the book of Ezra. The motif of liberation from the exile as a second exodus developed in response to the Babylonian exile. The image is prominent in Deutero-Isaiah (cf. Isa 52:11-12), Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 20:35-38) and also in Jeremiah (cf. Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8).⁴⁸ One example

(ed. J. G. McConville and Karl Möller; LHBOTS 461; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 156-170.

⁴⁵ H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 16.

⁴⁶ H. G. M. Williamson sees the second exodus not as a solitary event but as a 'type of experience which successive generations may enjoy,' for that reason he does not limit the second exodus to Ezra 1 but includes Ezra 7-8 (and to a decree Nehemiah 9); see H. G. M. Williamson, "The Torah and History," 163.

⁴⁷ Klaus Koch, "Ezra and the Origins of Judaism," 184.

⁴⁸ See Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1968), 58-61. For a good discussion of the exodus motif in Deutero-Isaiah; see Meira Polliack, "Deutero-Isaiah's Typological Use of Jacob in the Portrayal of Israel's National Renewal," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman; JSOTSup 319; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 72-110. For a discussion of the exodus motif in Ezekiel and Jeremiah; see Lawrence Boadt, "Do Jeremiah and Ezekiel Share a Common View of Exile?," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen* (ed. John Goldingay; LHBOTS 459; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 14-31.

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of the modification of the second exodus into an 'improved and superior exodus' can be found in Isa 52:12: 'For you shall not go out in haste, and you shall not go in flight, for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.'

H.G.M. Williamson identifies the second exodus motif in Ezra 1, found especially in verses 5-7, based on the use of the motif 'despoiling of the Egyptians' in verse 6, the return of the temple vessels (a reference to Isa 52:11-12) and the allusion in verse 11 'brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem' which corresponds to 'brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land...' (Exod 33:1).⁴⁹ Williamson sees a connection to the exodus event, in which the Egyptians freely give of their wealth to the Israelites.⁵⁰ In contrast to this, the book of Exodus the Israelites are always told that they need to ask the Egyptians for gifts (Exod 3:21-22; 11:2-3; 12:35-36) and this is absent from Ezra. Joseph Blenkinsopp points to the similarity in Ezra 1:5 between the freewill offering from the *golah* and the freewill offering given by the heads of families that preceded the building of the First Temple (cf. 1 Chr 29:6-9).⁵¹ Williamson also argues that the book of Ezra portrays these events as a second-exodus and thus, 'all their neighbours' refer to non-Judeans. This is a possible explanation but does not take enough account of the partial, unfinished nature of the exodus allusions in Ezra. The decree in Ezra 1:2-4 stresses that the aim of the return is temple rebuilding rather than a universal return. Not even the second-return decree in Ezra 7:13 portrays the return under Ezra as a universal return. Ezra 7:13 stresses the voluntary nature of the return and describes those who returned as the ones who freely offered to go to Jerusalem. Koch also rightfully pointed out that second-return is described as a 'cultic procession.' In general, it is unlikely that the *golah*-favouring book of Ezra would portray the Babylonian *golah* community in the time of Cyrus negatively. It is consistent with the overall presentation of the book to view the

⁴⁹ H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 16, 19.

⁵⁰ Another connection could have been that the Pharaoh issued a decree that the people should leave (cf. Exod 12:31).

⁵¹ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 78.

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contributions of the *golah* in Babylon in a positive light.⁵² The return decree in Ezra 1 alludes to the exodus tradition but does not claim this to be *the* return or *the* new exodus. Koch is aware that the return from Babylon in the book of Ezra does not compare favourably in scale, numbers, or leadership to the exodus under Moses. Under Ezra the return was not universal and did not include all scattered diaspora communities and its size is limited compared to the initial exodus.⁵³ Thus, it seems fair to suggest that the book of Ezra describes both returns as partially fulfilled exodus events.⁵⁴

An interesting contribution to the reading of Ezra-Nehemiah is made by Peter Ross Bedford, who stresses the interconnectedness between the repatriates and the diaspora, to the extent that 'the repatriates form an extension of the Babylonian-Persian diaspora community.'⁵⁵ Yehud is portrayed as a colony of the Babylonian exiled community. The diaspora homeland relationship is defined through the three missions sent out by the Babylonian and Elamite diaspora to provide leadership for Yehud. The first mission under Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple (Ezra 1-6). The second mission (Ezra 7-10), according to the order of the book, is sent to regulate the community of repatriates according to the law of God and the king (Ezra 7:26). The third mission of Nehemiah from Elam (not Babylon) is to rebuild the walls, re-organise the temple personnel and financial support for the temple and correct social and religious frictions. The presentation of the problems in Yehud highlights the diaspora's view that the community falters under local Yehudian leadership when

⁵² Williamson agrees in a later work that no blame is attached to those who remained in Babylon after 538 BCE; see H. G. M. Williamson, "The Torah and History," 163; also Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 152.

⁵³ Num 26:51 records the numbers of the exodus as 601,730. Ezra 2:64-65 records more than 50,000 people while the second return included a much smaller number of people (Ezra 8:1-14).

⁵⁴ Similarly, Klaus Koch, "Ezra and the Origins of Judaism," 189. Melody Knowles argues that because the exodus tradition was 'accomplished' in Ezra through a series of journeys the best way to describe it is through the pilgrimage image; see Melody Knowles, *Centrality Practiced*, 85.

⁵⁵ Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 152.

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no guidance is provided by the diaspora.⁵⁶ This is especially true in religious matters in both books Ezra introduces the Torah back into Yehud (Nehemiah 8, Ezra 7). Bedford also makes the point that Esther and Daniel 1-6 can be interpreted as providing a 'lifestyle for the diaspora.' In contrast, Ezra-Nehemiah is then a 'lifestyle for the homeland' based on the recognition that the problems faced in the diaspora and in the homeland in the multi-cultural Persian period are not different from each other. Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah are presented as diaspora heroes, who do a great service to Yehud. The message of these books, according to Bedford, is, therefore, that Judeans in Yehud are not more privileged than those in the diaspora.⁵⁷ Generally, there is much to commend in Bedford's reconstruction of the self-presentation of the diaspora. He is especially right to avoid linking the combined literary work of Ezra-Nehemiah to the *golah* community, because throughout the book of Nehemiah the focus is broadened to include the wider Babylonian-Elamite diaspora. However, it is not clear how more than 100 years after the initial return, after the establishment of the temple and after the introduction of divinely sanctioned Torah worship, the books of Ezra-Nehemiah could be a programme for life in the homeland. Contributions from the past fade in light of the newly established and strengthened temple community in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the place of authentic worship, according to the book of Moses, and thus can claim superiority in religious matters. It seems more convincing to argue that the books of Ezra-Nehemiah portray an alternative diaspora (or *golah*) vision of Yahwistic worship that downplays the Jerusalem temple and its leadership. The Babylonian *golah* also have (or portray themselves in such a manner as having) the political experience of dealing with the empire and their experience may have brought stability and prosperity to the people of Yehud. H.G.M. Williamson makes a similar point when he suggests that the *golah* had worked out a *modus vivendi*

⁵⁶ Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 157.

⁵⁷ Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 164-165.

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regarding the balance between loyalty to YHWH and loyalty to the king.⁵⁸

The *golah* missions are presented with the aim of equating 'the law of YHWH' and 'the law of the king' (Ezra 7:26). The books of Ezra-Nehemiah present the Persian kings and the administration as acting under YHWH's guidance to provide support for the temple in Jerusalem and the community in Yehud.⁵⁹ The mediator between Yehud and the imperial administration is the legitimized divinely chosen channel, namely the Babylonian *golah*. This is not just for the tiny state of Yehud but rather, for the whole satrapy 'Beyond the River' (Ezra 7:25) and ultimately, for Jerusalem, as the *golah* influence other diaspora communities. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah list seven different imperial kings who, through the established relationship between the Babylonian diaspora and the imperial centre, bestow blessings on Yehud.⁶⁰

The narrational presentation of the return in 538 BCE in the book of Ezra is through the theological and *golah*-favouring lenses of the diaspora. The narrative assumes that by 538 only a few (if any) survivors of the deportation might have been alive and the most intense longing for home would have been preserved within this group. Their children and grandchildren (second and third generation exiles) were not rooted in the ancestral homeland and were, therefore, reluctant to give up their own place of birth in order to embark on a dangerous overland voyage to Palestine, which was agriculturally and economically a backwater province and which could only provide hardship and uncertainty for

⁵⁸ H. G. M. Williamson, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography* (FAT 38; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 42.

⁵⁹ Lester L. Grabbe, "What was Ezra's Mission?," in *Second Temple Studies: 2. Temple Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards; JSOTSup 175; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 286-299, esp. 289.

⁶⁰ For the historical reconstruction, see Sara Japhet, "Composition and Chronology in the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Second Temple Studies: 2. Temple Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards; JSOTSup 175; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 189-216, esp. 202.

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those wishing to return. Nevertheless, those remaining participated in giving generously (Ezra 1:6) and in doing so showed their support and allegiance to Jerusalem and its temple. The *golah*-favouring book of Ezra naturally portrays the *golah* as concerned, involved and participating in the rebuilding of the temple in the early restoration period.

The population list in Ezra 2 is not the list of the actual returnees of 538 BCE. According to the book of Ezra the first return was under Sheshbazzar in 538 BCE (Ezra 1:8-11).⁶¹ The second return is in 520 BCE under Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra 3). In the lists in the book of Ezra the first and second returns are combined into one. Overall, the book of Ezra gives the number of returnees as nearly 50,000 (Ezra 2:64-65),⁶² which contrasts with the meagre numbers of the return under Ezra, which is less than 1,500 (Ezra 8:1-14).⁶³ The list of the returnees in Ezra 2 calls for some clarification. Ezra 2 lists the return as guided by Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bishan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah (Ezra 2:2). Is Ezra 2 a list of all deportees who returned in 538 BCE? Or is Ezra 2 a list of all returnees ever returned to Yehud? Or is it a list of the population of Yehud at the time of the census underlying the list ('these were the people of the province' – Ezra 2:1)? Ezra 2 mentions a number of individuals who led return journeys to Yehud but who are clearly not a part of the initial return in 538 BCE. Zerubbabel and Jeshua led a return in 520 BCE, which is narrated in Ezra 3-5. Nehemiah is known from the book of Nehemiah and as there is no other character with the same name known in the Hebrew Bible, it is most probable that this is a reference to the same individual.⁶⁴ The

⁶¹ Sheshbazzar is credited with receiving the temple vessels back and returning them to Yehud (Ezra 1:8-9). He is also credited with an initial laying of the foundation of the temple (Ezra 5:16). For further discussion, especially regarding identifying him with Zerubbabel or Shenazzar; see Tamara C. Eskenazi, "Sheshbazzar" *ABD* 5:1207-1209.

⁶² The discrepancy between the total in the list in Ezra 2 and the total Ezra 2:64 further complicates the interpretation of these verses.

⁶³ H. G. M. Williamson puts the total number, including women and children, at 5,000; see H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 110.

⁶⁴ Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998), 13.

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parallel list in Neh 7:7 lists Azariah, which is a variant of Ezra, instead of Seraiah. Thus, Ezra 2, because of its non-chronological listing of later return leaders, is best understood as a list, summarising returnees of either or both 538 BCE and 520 BCE, or a census list of those living in the province at one time.

The return itself is never described in Ezra-Nehemiah. Ezra 1 narrates events in the *golah*, the collection entrusted to the returnees, and the handing over of the temple vessels to Sheshbazzar, which is followed by a statement that Sheshbazzar included all these items when 'the exiles were brought up from Babylonia' (Ezra 1:11). Further references to the technical details of the return journey are not recorded. The actual return of Zerubbabel and Jeshua is also not recorded. Ezra 7:9 records that Ezra's journey took around four months for a group of at least 1,500 people to make the overland journey, the journey was dangerous and normally required a military escort (cf. Ezra 8:22). Nehemiah was able to travel with officers of the army and horsemen (Neh 2:11) but also had a permission to travel freely through the empire to Yehud (Neh 2:7).⁶⁵ Nothing is known about the route taken, though it might be assumed that all overland returnees travelled on tightly regulated royal roads.⁶⁶ No reference to travel through the wilderness of Arabia is recorded, even though it would have fitted the image of the exodus through the wilderness.⁶⁷ The need for imperial authorisation and the high costs involved in overland travel would have hampered any mass return.

A convincing attempt is made by Edelman to link Persian imperial policies more closely to the repopulating of Yehud and to the rebuilding of

⁶⁵ Diana Edelman suggests that the military escort of Nehemiah was not for his personal protection. They were not simple soldiers but officers posted to the new garrison in Jerusalem; for the full discussion see Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 346-347.

⁶⁶ Travel on royal roads was highly regulated and needed a prior official authorisation. For further details about travel in the Persian empire; see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 364-383.

⁶⁷ Camel caravans crossed Arabia for trade purposes; see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 378.

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the Jerusalem as a *birah*, a manned, fort-like military installation. Edelman's reconstruction analyses the reason why the Persians initiated the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which only subsequently resulted in the temple being rebuilt. Her reconstruction focuses solely on the historically probable events. Thereby she avoids mistaking the theological interpretations of these historical events as expressed in the book of Ezra for history. She argues that Jerusalem was rebuilt as a *birah* during the 440s BCE as part of a wider Persian reorganisation under Artaxerxes I. They built a series of *birot*, guard stations, inns and caravanserai along the major roads of the empire. The sparsely populated Judean hill-country and the Shephelah were supplied with a new labour force (mainly of returning Judahites but also of people of other nationalities) to increase food production and tax return from Yehud. Part of the re-organisation in Yehud was that the capital was moved from Mizpah to Jerusalem.⁶⁸ Edelman's suggestion regarding the return of new settlers in light of wider Persian imperial policy and practice is especially noteworthy, as it highlights a reasonable historical scenario underlying the theologically interpreted return of settlers to Yehud. The deportees were settled together in communities in their places of exile, so it was easy to identify Judahites in Babylon and return some of them to their ancestral homeland. The new farmers were assigned imperial land and were expected to provide corvée and military service upon the request of the overlords. Evidence for this Persian policy can be seen in the founding of 94 new farmsteads on previously uncultivated land.⁶⁹ Some of the new settlers were re-settled to Yehud because of their specialised military training and these were then given plots of land and were to be soldiers for military campaigns. It was Persian practice to settle small military units throughout the countryside in addition to full-time soldiers in the garrison cities.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 9.

⁶⁹ Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 342.

⁷⁰ Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 343.

3.4. *Golah* Influence on Jeremiah

A significant monograph was published in 1978 by Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann in which he argues that the final form of the book of Jeremiah reflects the rivalry between the *golah* (those exiled in 597 to Babylon) and those who remained in the land.⁷¹ In this research Pohlmann identifies a very limited *Grundtext* that subsequently went through a '*gola-orientierte Redaktion*' (*golah*-oriented redaction known in English as *golah*-redaction).⁷² The main goal of the *golah* redaction was to alter the existing texts in order to highlight that the *golah* community of 597 BCE alone constitutes continuity with and is the rightful heir of the old 'Israel' in YHWH's plan of salvation.⁷³ According to Pohlmann, this *golah*-redaction addresses the main questions that arose due to the exilic disruptions of the political and religious status quo. The severity of the Babylonian disruption prompted the question of whether there was no future for the nation (cf. Jer 21:1-10) or whether a possibility remained of YHWH's future salvific deeds towards his people. Jeremiah 24 provides the answer to this question, namely that YHWH exclusively chose the Babylonian 597 *golah* to continue his plan for the nation.⁷⁴

Pohlmann dates the *golah*-redaction to the fourth century BCE and locates it in Yehud.⁷⁵ The logic for this is that it is inconceivable that the

⁷¹ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Jeremiabuches* (FRLANT 118; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).

⁷² Christoph Levin is of the opinion that the *golah*-redaction is not one literary layer but rather is made of a number of literary layers, see Christoph Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes* (FRLANT 137; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 66-67, see also 165-178.

⁷³ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 183.

⁷⁴ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 20. See also Ernest Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles*, 111.

⁷⁵ For rightful criticisms of Pohlmann's late dating of the *golah*-redaction; see Christopher R. Seitz, "The Crisis of Interpretation over the Meaning and Purpose of the Exile: a Redactional Study of Jeremiah 21-43," *VT* 35, no. 1 (1985): 78-97, esp. 80-81; Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit: Studien zur Textentwicklung von Jer 26, 36-43 und 45 als Beitrag zur Geschichte*

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empty-land motif could have successfully been used early in the restoration period to describe exilic Yehud, as long as people in Yehud would remember that their ancestors had an unbroken record of settlement in Yehud. Such a description would have been found out and would have undermined the claim of continuity between pre-exilic Judah and the 597 *golah* and its descendants. Only after enough time passed (he points to the work of Nehemiah) and after the returned *golah* had gained enough political and religious influence and support in society did the *golah*-redaction take place.⁷⁶ The redaction manifested the changed pro-*golah* stand of society, rather than attempting to win over the population for a pro-*golah* stand.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the *golah*-redacted book of Jeremiah still contains the original *Vorlage*, the accounts of Jeremiah just before and after the fall of Jerusalem, which could not be ignored or deleted by the redactors (Jer 37:11-Jeremiah 42). The *golah*-redaction instead chose to frame it with *golah*-favouring passages to adapt these passages to the new intended meaning (Jeremiah 43 contains the account of Jeremiah taken to Egypt).⁷⁸ Jeremiah 24 concludes the first part of the book by revealing that King Zedekiah and his countrymen are rejected and that YHWH's favour is with the 597 *golah* in Babylon. This is followed by promises to the 597 *golah* of blessing and a future restoration (see especially Jeremiah 27-34). Jeremiah

Jeremias, seines Buches und jüdischer Parteien im 6. Jahrhundert (BBB 82; Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1992), 134-135; Konrad Schmid, "Manasse und der Untergang Judas: 'Golaorientierte' Theologie in den Königebüchern?," *Bib* 78, no. 1 (1997): 87-99, esp. 97; Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 308.

⁷⁶ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann suggests for the book of Ezekiel a *golah*-orientated redaction that took place in the end of the 5th century BCE which was followed by a diaspora-orientated redaction in the 4th century. See Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezechiel) Kapitel 1-19* (ATD 22/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 34. Unfortunately, Pohlmann does not provide any further information of how he came to that conclusion, or which historical situation the *golah*-redaction or the diaspora-redaction are addressing. He also does not explain why his *golah*-redaction in Jeremiah is dated to a different century than his *golah*-redaction in Ezekiel.

⁷⁷ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 190-191.

⁷⁸ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 191-194.

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37-44 relates the disobedience of the people who remained in the land and the reasons why their remnant status was lost and the land became completely emptied of people during the exile.

Pohlmann identifies Jeremiah 24 as the key passage in the *golah*-favouring redaction that governs the interpretation of the whole book.⁷⁹ Jeremiah 24 draws a sharp line between the 597 *golah* and their descendants (the good figs) and those Judahites who stayed in the land, as well as those who fled to Egypt (bad figs). In addition, the *golah*-redaction distinguishes between the 597 *golah* and the second deportation of 587. The first is 'sent away' (Jer 24:5) and preserved in Babylon, while the 587 deportation is rejected, together with the remaining population and the Egyptian diaspora, and included in the bad fig analogy (Jer 24:8).⁸⁰ Jeremiah 21:1-10 describes YHWH's complete and utter rejection of the royal house of Zedekiah and the city of Jerusalem and begs the question of how and whether YHWH is going to continue the relationship with his people.⁸¹ This is similar to Jeremiah's own assessment of the failure of the repeated prophetic calls for reform to win widespread support (Jer 6:27-30). The answer is subsequently provided in Jeremiah 24 – only through the 597 *golah*.⁸² Jeremiah 24 is connected

⁷⁹ For the same conclusion about the importance of Jeremiah 24, see Konrad Schmid, "Manasse und der Untergang Judas," 97. For an argument that Jeremiah 24 is not an exilic redaction but original to the prophet Jeremiah, see Kenton Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 277-280.

⁸⁰ For a treatment of the concept of remnant, see Sara Japhet, "The Concept of the 'Remnant' in the Restoration Period: On the Vocabulary of Self-Definition," in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), repr. from *Das Manna fällt auch heute noch: Festschrift für Erich Zenger* (ed. F.-L. Hossfeld and L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger; Freiburg: Herder, 2004).

⁸¹ See also, Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, "Religion in der Krise - Krise einer Religion: Die Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels in 587 v. Chr.," in *Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels* (ed. Johannes Hahn; WUNT 147; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 40-60, esp. 42.

⁸² Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 19-20. Konrad Schmid suggests the historical background for Jeremiah 24 is the post-exilic conflict between returnees and the people of the land; see Konrad Schmid, "Hintere

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to passages like Jer 29:16-19 and 44:11-14 but also to the salvation oracles of Jeremiah 29-33. The salvation oracles in Jeremiah 30-33 are re-interpreted through Jeremiah 29, which addresses the *golah*, and subsequently the salvation oracles are claimed by Pohlmann to address exclusively the 597 *golah*.⁸³ A link also exists to the oracles of doom in Jeremiah 37-44, which are associated with the remaining Judahites in the land and with the Egyptian diaspora.

Pohlmann is certainly right to highlight the prominence of the *golah* in the book of Jeremiah. Yet the redactional layer identified by him, which contains a *golah*- favouring focus, is smaller than Pohlmann suggests. He argues that Jer 21:1-10 closely corresponds to Jeremiah 24, even though Jer 21:9 contains the message for the 587 deportees (not the 597 deportees) that if they surrender to the Babylonians, they shall live and gain their 'life as a prize of war.' This group is subsequently described as being deported to Babylon when Jerusalem fell in 587 BCE (Jer 39:9) together with all the other people. The fate of this group is nowhere fully addressed in Jeremiah. Jeremiah 39-44 narrates how the land was initially repopulated by the returning Judahites from the diaspora only to be completely emptied when everyone fled to Egypt. The Jeremiah 24 narrative is located prior to the 587 deportation.

A consistent theology of exile is applied throughout the narratives of the book of Jeremiah. Exile is punishment for breaking the covenantal stipulations.⁸⁴ Dalit Rom-Shiloni identifies four exilic concepts in Jeremiah: (1) total calamity within the land; (2) deportation and dispersion; (3) existence in exile; (4) restoration in exile or from exile. She denies a

Propheten (Nebiim)," in *Grundinformation Altes Testament* (ed. Jan Christian Gertz; UTB 2745; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 303-401, esp. 345.

⁸³ For a criticism see R. J. R. Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs: Judicial Differentiation in the Book of Jeremiah* (LHBOTS 483; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 35.

⁸⁴ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile: Interpreted in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Chaim Cohen, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 101-123, esp. 103.

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strong presence of the fourth exilic concept of restoration from exile in Jeremiah and identifies only the restoration passage in Jer 16:14-15 with this concept.⁸⁵ Yet the message of restoration of the whole diaspora (not just the 597 *golah*) is a repeated theme also in Jer 29:10-14; 30:1-24; 31:1-40; 32:37-42 and 33:10-13. Thus, the diaspora restoration message is an integral part of the message of Jeremiah. One hermeneutical question can be posed in relation to the role and function of verses that promise a continuous settlement in Yehud as a result of obedience to YHWH (Jer 21:9). Are they the redactional voice of an earlier version, or are they literary devices to create and maintain tension in the narrative? Jeremiah 21:9 and Jeremiah 40-43 function in the narrative to highlight the possibility of remaining in Yehud during the Babylonian period as a result of submission to the foreign power. Similarly, Jeremiah buys a field in Anathoth during the siege of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, indicating that the remnant will continue to exist long-term in Yehud (Jer 32:1-44). These passages highlight that obedience to YHWH would have resulted in the remnant remaining in Yehud. Yet their continuous open rebellion, disregard and disobedience rendered this chance impossible (cf. Jer 34:8-22).

Jeremiah 24 also reformulates and reapplies the deuteronomic covenant curse, the curse of becoming a horror in foreign lands, for disobeying the covenantal stipulations. In Deut 28:25 and 28:37 the punishment for breaking the covenant is exile and an existence in fear and despair in foreign lands. Jer 24:9-10 adapts the deuteronomic exilic curse to the prophecy of the good and bad figs. The 597 *golah* is the recipient of covenant blessing (Jer 24:6-7). The covenant curses are exclusively applied to the members of the 587 deportation of King Zedekiah, the remnant in the land and the Egyptian diaspora. But does it mean that these later groups are treated especially badly? The curses for breaking the covenant in Jer 24:9-10 are not different from the covenant curses in Deuteronomy 28 or from Jeremiah's judgment

⁸⁵ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile," 119. In fairness, it has to be pointed out that her study is about deuteronomic concepts of exile. In Deuteronomy only 4:25-31 contains the concept of restoration. She identifies these verses as a non-Jeremianan 'correction' of the *golah* in Babylon (p. 123).

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oracles in Jer 15:1-9, 9:12-16; 25:18; 27:8; 29:17-19; 34:17-22. The covenant curse applies to the Egyptian diaspora in the same manner as it does to every other group that breaks the divine covenant. The only exception is the 597 *golah*, which are exempted from the curses and blessed instead. The idea is that everyone is rightfully under the covenant curse,⁸⁶ a curse that promised exile. Jeremiah 24:10 does not promise destruction and annihilation but rather, that 'they shall be utterly destroyed *from the land...of their fathers*' (emphasis mine). In this case, Pohlmann overstates the evidence.

Im Rahmen der bisher in Jer 24 erkennbaren Konzeption wird deutlich die babylonische Gola in den Mittelpunkt gerückt, und zwar als die Gruppe, der ausschließlich Jahwes Heilshandeln gelten sollte. Folglich mußte für die Restbevölkerung Judas und Jerusalems Jahwes Unheilshandeln angekündigt werden. [In line with the already in Jer 24 recognisable concept the Babylonian Golah is clearly moved to the centre, as the group that will exclusively benefit from Yahweh's acts of salvation. Logically, for the remaining population of Judah and Jerusalem Yahweh's acts of calamity must be announced.]⁸⁷

I agree that the 597 *golah* takes centre stage in Jeremiah 24 but that does not mean YHWH's salvation is exclusively (*ausschließlich*) addressed to them. Pohlmann also sees a logical progression from one group being chosen to the active condemnation of all other groups. Yet the choosing of one group does *not* necessarily or logically result in the condemnation of all other groups. YHWH's choosing of Israel did not result in the universal cursing of humankind. Jeremiah 24 does not contain the image of the bad figs being thrown out and discarded (an image that would suit the context of rotten, useless figs in a basket). The passage overall stresses a continuity of blessing for the deportees in Babylon and the continuation of the covenant curses for the rest of the scattered diaspora.

⁸⁶ A similar point is made by Pohlmann but unfortunately not developed further; see Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 46.

⁸⁷ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 27.

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Jeremiah 24 is central to the discussion of the origin and redactions of the book. The main question is whether Jeremiah 24 could have been part of the original prophetic message from the time of Jeremiah, or whether, as Albertz claims, it is only an 'isolated late Deuteronomistic supplement' from the time in the mid-fifth century BCE when it was normal to trace one's ancestry back to the *golah*.⁸⁸ Albertz follows here the basic interpretation of Pohlmann, which assumes the exclusive chosenness of the 597 *golah* and its descendants over and above all other Judean communities. A further question is how well integrated Jeremiah 24 is in the overall message of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 24:6, with its references to building and planting, picks up the theme of the call of Jeremiah in Jer 1:10. The same theme is further developed in Jeremiah's letter to the 597 *golah* in Jer 29:5 (compare the diaspora restoration message in Jer 31:28; the warning not to go to Egypt in Jer 42:10). The condemnation is of those who did not surrender to the Babylonians in Jer 24:8: King Zedekiah, the remnant in Jerusalem and those who fled to Egypt. This condemnation ties in with Jeremiah's overall message of divinely willed surrender to the Babylonians (21:9; 27:1-22; 38:17-21; 40:9). Two communities are excluded: the remnant of Jerusalem who did surrender before the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and those who surrendered in 597 BCE. The curse on these who chose not to surrender is the same as that which is continuously applied to those who disobey YHWH.⁸⁹ Only through being refined in judgment will the community be considered as YHWH's people.⁹⁰ The exiles in Babylon, who exemplify Jeremiah's message of 'surrender and live,' receive special treatment in Jeremiah (cf. Jer 27:22; 29:4; 29:20). In general, Jeremiah 24 reflects continuity in its use of the repeated guiding themes of Jeremiah and illustrates Jeremiah's message of surrendering and surviving with regard to the *golah*.⁹¹ Jeremiah 24, therefore, is an integral part of the message of the prophet Jeremiah.

⁸⁸ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 308.

⁸⁹ Cf. Jer 15:1-9, 9:12-16; 25:18; 27:8; 29:17-19; 34:17-22.

⁹⁰ For this idea; see Robert P. Carroll, "Myth of the Empty Land," 80-81.

⁹¹ The argument about dating Jeremiah 24 to the time after 587 BCE, after Gedaliah's assassination is due to the reference to Egypt must be rejected as it

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It is surprising that Pohlmann does not address the issue of restoration promises to the whole scattered diaspora in 'all the countries' of their scattering (cf. Jer 16:15; 29:14; 23:3,8; 30:11; 31:1; 32:37; 33:7-8).⁹² Pohlmann simply re-interprets the salvation oracles in Jeremiah 30-33 as exclusively addressing the 597 *golah*. Even so, the scattered communities (in the plural) are among many nations (in the plural). The salvation oracle in Jer 32:37 stresses this:

Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety.

These promises are *not* exclusively addressed to the 597 *golah* community in Babylon.⁹³ In the context of the judgment prophecy against Egypt, the last two verses address Jacob, which is representative of at least the diaspora community in Egypt if not the whole diaspora and these verses promise restoration (Jer 46:27-28).⁹⁴ The book of Jeremiah contains an inclusive focus on the wider scattered diaspora and not, as Pohlmann suggests, a narrow exclusive focus on the 597 *golah*. These references do not seem to be a distinct redactional layer (as Pohlmann argues for

fails to pay adequate attention to the motif of the empty land in Jeremiah after Gedaliah's assassination (cf. Jer 43:4-7). For the argument see Robert P. Carroll, *The Book of Jeremiah: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1986), 482. Jeremiah 24 contains references to the remnant in the land and refugees in Egypt, and this situation did exist between 597 and 587 BCE. Therefore, there is no need to interpret the chapter any differently from the historical scenario provided in Jer 24:1.

⁹² This criticism also applies to Robert P. Carroll who explicitly denies the presence of an '*ideology of diaspora*' in the book of Jeremiah; see Robert P. Carroll, "The Book of J: Intertextuality and Ideological Criticism," in *Troubling Jeremiah* (ed. A. R. Pete Diamond, et al.; JSOTSup 260; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 220-243, esp. 239.

⁹³ See also Christoph Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes*, 168-169.

⁹⁴ This is similar to the picture of the exile that Deuteronomy 4:29 paints, 'but from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.'

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Ezekiel) but rather seem to be a reflection based on general deuteronomic covenant language, which promises scattering as a result of disobedience.

The 597 *golah* is not presented throughout the book of Jeremiah in a positive light. Jeremiah 22:24-30 announces the complete and utter rejection of King Jehoiachin and all his offspring. Jeremiah 24:5 makes the explicit point that the 597 *golah* is not good, that they deserve the exile as punishment. Jeremiah 29:8-9 declares the prophets and diviners in the 597 *golah* to be false; especially mentioned in this regard are: Ahab the son of Kolaiah, the priest Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah (Jer 29:21) and the priest Shemaiah of Nehelam (Jer 29:24). The 597 *golah* community does not receive a general *carte blanche* of election in the book of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 24 is a central chapter for the 597 *golah's* self-understanding. Pohlmann argues that Jeremiah 24 changes the whole book of Jeremiah to a narrow 597 *golah*-orientated focus. Yet, the reason for the rejection of the remnant in Judah and the Egyptian diaspora is not narrated until chapters 37-43 and only in light of these chapters does the statement in Jeremiah 24 make sense. The location of this 'redactional insertion' does not strengthen the *golah*-focus of the book. For this to be the case it should logically have been placed after the narration of the rejection of the remnant in the land and of the Egyptian diaspora. R. J. P. Plant makes the observation that Jeremiah 24 does not really govern the interpretation of the whole book and asks the question if the 597 *golah* claim really has the final word, 'or is it simply juxtaposed alongside other polarities?'⁹⁵ Plant's observation is certainly right, although it overlooks the fact that the 597 *golah* community is presented as a first fruit of divine mercy and not as Pohlmann's exclusive chosen community. YHWH chose, for an unknown reason, to 'regard them as good.' YHWH's turning to the 597 *golah* is not based on the *golah's* merit and in this way new possibilities of YHWH's mercy are open to all his scattered people. It is that the 597 *golah* was chosen to be the first recipient of

⁹⁵ R. J. R. Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs*, 36.

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this special blessing. 'The covenant relationship will require their whole-hearted seeking of YHWH (24:6-7; 29:10-14); and even this is *facilitated* by his gift of a new heart, it is not *guaranteed*.'⁹⁶

In 594/3 BCE Jeremiah gave a unique prophecy about the king of Babylon: 'Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant' (Jer 27:6), was granted world dominion by YHWH. This effectively resulted in a view that rebellion against Babylon equals rebellion against God.⁹⁷ This must have further strengthened the diaspora's conviction that Babylon was the place to settle down and not rebel. John Goldingay supports this, pointing out that theologically speaking, superpowers who think they serve no one, actually serve YHWH.⁹⁸ This must have come as a reassuring thought, affirming YHWH's ultimate control. It must also be highlighted that, in the same year of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the prophet Jeremiah prophesied and then, by a trustee, symbolically re-enacted the utter destruction of Babylon (Jeremiah 50-51).⁹⁹ The positive and negative association of Babylon as the place to settle for a time, coupled with the warning that YHWH's judgment awaits the city, seriously undermines any claim for the superiority of the Babylonian *golah* community.

⁹⁶ R. J. R. Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs*, 188 (emphasis original).

⁹⁷ Klaas A. D. Smelik, "An Approach to the Book of Jeremiah," in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence* (ed. Martin Kessler; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 1-11, esp. 2. See also Robert P. Carroll, "The Polyphonic Jeremiah: A Reading of the Book of Jeremiah," in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence* (ed. Martin Kessler; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 77-85, esp. 83, where he says, 'resistance to Babylon is represented in chaps. 27-29 as opposition to YHWH, so submission to the imperial power becomes obedience to the divine will.'

⁹⁸ John Goldingay, "Jeremiah and the Superpower," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen* (ed. John Goldingay; LHBOTS 459; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 59-77, esp. 63.

⁹⁹ For an assessment of these two chapters in the light of Jeremiah's ministry; see Klaas A. D. Smelik, "The Function of Jeremiah 50 and 51 in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Reading the Book of Jeremiah: A Search for Coherence* (ed. Martin Kessler; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 87-98.

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Pohlmann's dating of the *golah*-redaction to the fourth century is regularly criticised for being unnecessarily late.¹⁰⁰ Pohlmann's dating is based on the assumption that the empty-land motif is primarily an ideological construct of the Babylonian *golah* and not a general near-eastern religious motif, as Edelman has demonstrated.¹⁰¹ Therefore, no need exists to place the *golah*-favouring at a time far removed from the return. It also remains unclear as to how, in the fourth century BCE, exclusive continuity with the 597 deportation can be claimed, when not even Ezra and Nehemiah are explicitly linked to the 597 *golah*.¹⁰² The book of Chronicles does not distinguish between different deportations (cf. 1 Chr 6:15). Konrad Schmidt locates the *golah*-redaction in the restoration period when the *golah* group and the people of the land struggled for influence in Yehud.¹⁰³ The presentation of the 597 *golah* in the book of Jeremiah is more nuanced than a simply positive presentation. Plant also noted that Jeremiah, Abed-Melek and Baruch receive personal salvation oracles (Jer 1:8, 18-19; 15:19-21; Jer 39:15-18; 45:1-5), indicating judicial differentiation among those in the land after 597 BCE.¹⁰⁴ Members of the influential Shapan family and of the Hilkiah family (including Jeremiah) were also not part of the 597 *golah*.¹⁰⁵ Members of the 597 *golah* are excluded from the salvation message. Their king, Jehoiachin, is deemed unfit and rejected, the deportees do not merit being the recipients of continuous divine blessing, their restoration is linked with a renewed covenantal commitment, the city they live in is doomed. The argument to counter the presentation and the claims of the *golah* in the book of Jeremiah is a simple: 'we all sinned,

¹⁰⁰ Christopher R. Seitz, "The Crisis of Interpretation," 80; William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Vol 1* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 614; Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 134-135; R. J. R. Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs*, 33-35.

¹⁰¹ Diana Edelman, "'Empty Land' as a Motif in City Laments," 129-142.

¹⁰² Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 191.

¹⁰³ Konrad Schmid, "Manasse und der Untergang Judas," 97.

¹⁰⁴ R. J. R. Plant, *Good Figs, Bad Figs*, 186.

¹⁰⁵ The following Shapanides are in Yehud between 597 and 587 BCE: Jaazaniah (Ezek 8:11), Elasha (Jer 29:3), Gemariah (Jer 36:10), Micaiah (Jer 36:11), Gedaliah (Jer 39:14), as is Gemariah son of Hilkiah (Jer 29:3).

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we all did wrong.’ Then equality is re-established between all exiled communities. Primacy can only be claimed by the 597 *golah* when the rejection of all other communities is linked to them being actively, eternally rejected and annihilated, not just removed or finished (*µmt - tamam*) from the land (Jer 24:10).¹⁰⁶ But this is not the case in the book of Jeremiah. All of these points indicate that it is unlikely that the 597 *golah* could easily claim a special status that translates into actual power for this group.

It is also noteworthy that only the *golah*-redaction of the book of Jeremiah (and the *golah*-oriented redaction of 2 Kings¹⁰⁷) seems to contain evidence for the self-defining struggle of the 597 *golah* over and above earlier or later deportations and especially with regards to Yehud and the Egyptian diaspora. The books of Ezra-Nehemiah point to a tension between returnees and the people of the land in the restoration period but there the returnees are recruited from diaspora communities in the wider Babylonian-Elamite region and not exclusively from the Babylonian *golah*. No attempt is made to try to link the wider diaspora in the Babylonian-Elamite region to the 597 *golah*. These texts rather highlight an ongoing inter-diaspora relationship (not a *golah* relationship) in the wider Mesopotamian region. The presentation of the *golah* (simply understood here as the exiled diaspora community in Mesopotamia) shows that the community understood itself as linked to other Judahite

¹⁰⁶ The word *µmt* contains an intrinsic polarity of “finish up/finish off.” See B. Kedar-Kopfstein, ‘See B. Kedar-Kopfstein, "תָּמַם *tāmam*; תָּם *tām*, תָּמִים *tāmîm*; תֵּם *tōm*; תִּמָּה *tummâ*; תִּמְמִים *tummîm*." TDOT 15:699-711, esp. 703. Therefore, it is difficult to translate, as it can have a neutral, negative or positive connotation. The context needs to help decide the issue. The context does seem to suggest here a meaning of ‘full or completely’ emptied. William McKane translates the last section of the verse, as ‘until no trace is left of them in the land which I gave to them and their forefathers.’ See William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Vol 1*, 605.

¹⁰⁷ The argument for a *golah*-redaction in 2 Kings 24 is based on the presentation of the temple plundering in 597 BCE and the near total depopulation of Yehud in 24:13-14, which gives prominence to the 597 deportation; for further discussion see Konrad Schmid, "Manasse und der Untergang Judas," 94.

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settlements in the diaspora. The divine grace shown to them (Jer 24:5) initiated an understanding that they should use their preservation for the good of other Judahite diaspora communities and ultimately, through partial restoration, to influence religious and political life in Yehud.

It is pointed out that the earliest 'Jewish' diaspora did not develop a theoretical framework for diaspora existence.¹⁰⁸ A hint of it can be found in the letter to the exiles, which the prophet Jeremiah sent to Babylon telling them not to expect an immediate return from there but rather to prepare for life in Babylon.¹⁰⁹ This unique advice, given to an exiled community, to settle down in a foreign land, prompted Caryn Aviv and David Shneer to name the prophet Jeremiah the 'first theoretician of diaspora'¹¹⁰ for his advice:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jer 29:4-7)

Jeremiah's advice given to the exiles in Babylon mirrors his own call and commission by YHWH 'to build and to plant' (Jer 1:10), thus stressing the prophet's right to pronounce the breakdown and overthrowing of the established order of the kingdom. John Hill links the activities of Jeremiah's advice to the exiles to covenantal blessings when he points out that the deprivation of marrying, building of houses and planting

¹⁰⁸ Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, 243; Denise Eileen McCoskey, "Diaspora in the Reading of Jewish History, Identity, and Difference," *Diaspora* 12, no. 3 (2003): 387-418, esp. 388.

¹⁰⁹ Some see the reference in Jeremiah 29 to the exile, their children, and their grandchildren, a three generational; see Shemaryahu Talmon, "'Exile' and 'Restoration'," 128.

¹¹⁰ Caryn Aviv and David Shneer, *New Jews: the End of the Jewish Diaspora*, 4.

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vineyards is a curse (Deut 28:30). The enjoyment of these activities is associated with living in the promised land. Yet in Jer 29:5-7 these activities are mandated for the 597 *golah* in a foreign land.¹¹¹

Jeremiah 24, in its current location, announces judgment on King Zedekiah and his officials, the remnant of Jerusalem that are currently in the land and the Egyptian diaspora. Two groups escape judgment here: first, the remnant of Jerusalem that is *not* in the land and, secondly, any other Judahite diaspora community regardless of their location (cf. Jer 40:11). Jer 24:8 stresses the fact that the remnant of Jerusalem is divided between those 'who remain in the land' and 'those who left the land.' The latter group could be those who voluntarily surrendered to the Babylonians (cf. Jer 21:9). It could be theorised that these people were initially kept under Babylonian supervision a considerable distance from Jerusalem and, thus, outside the territory of Judah. They were kept there in order not to cause any disturbances, not to hinder the siege and to highlight their dependence on continuous submission to Babylon. Jeremiah recalls that Nebuchadnezzar's camp was in Riblah in Hamath/Syria (cf. Jer 39:5; 52:9, 27), to which deportees were brought. Jeremiah 24:1 provides a date sometime after the 597 deportation and so the reference to the Egyptian diaspora is either a later reference to the events following Gedaliah's assassination or more likely, a reference to the presence of a Judahite refugee community in Egypt following the events of 597 BCE (cf. Jer 26:20-23). Jeremiah's message was one of submission to the Babylonians and this oracle also stresses this point.¹¹²

In the book of Jeremiah the empty-land motif is used to stress the necessity of submission to Babylon. Hermann Josef Stipp points this out in an excellent study in which he argues that Jeremiah 37-43 narrates the 'decline of the Palestinian Judeans.'¹¹³ These chapters focus on the opportunities given and missed by the people of the land to follow the divinely revealed command to surrender to the Babylonian overlordship

¹¹¹ John Hill, "Your Exile will be Long," esp. 150.

¹¹² Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr, *Jeremiah 1-25* (WBC 26; Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 360.

¹¹³ Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 273-284.

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(Jer 38:20; 40:9; 42:6).¹¹⁴ The chance is first missed by King Zedekiah, resulting in the fall of Jerusalem and his own death.¹¹⁵ But more important is the decision of the 'assembly' of *all* the people in Geruth Chimham, following the assassination of Gedaliah, to leave for Egypt (Jer 41:17).¹¹⁶ The narrative stresses the inclusiveness of the complete Judahite society: the military, the royal remnant, returned exiles from all nations and all the people (*lk (kol)* in Jer 41:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16; 42:1, 8; 43:2, 4, 5, 6).

So Johanan the son of Kareah and *all* the commanders of the forces and *all* the people did not obey the voice of the LORD, to remain in the land of Judah. But Johanan the son of Kareah and *all* the commanders of the forces took *all* the remnant of Judah who had returned to live in the land of Judah from *all* the nations to which they had been driven – the men, the women, the children, the princesses, and *every* person whom Nebuzaradam the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah. (Jer 43:4-6 emphasis mine).

The people of the land actively (and foolishly compare 43:2 with its characterisation of 'insolent men') ignored the divine promise through the mouth of YHWH's true prophet, Jeremiah. His prophecies had just been vindicated through the Babylonian conquest but also through the peace and prosperity in the reign of Gedaliah. In Jer 42:12 the prophet

¹¹⁴ Eric Peels views the episode Jer 40:7-41:18, because of its ideology, as the product of the *golah* community in Babylon; see Eric Peels, "The Assassination of Gedaliah (Jer. 40:7-41:18)," in *Exile and Suffering* (ed. Bob Becking and Dirk Human; OtSt 50; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 83-103, esp. 102-103.

¹¹⁵ Christof Hardmeier even argues that the presentation of Zedekiah as an extremely weak, undecided and powerless king is used to discredit monarchy in general; see Christof Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit vor dem Untergang Judas: erzählkommunikative Studien zur Entstehungssituation der Jesaja- und Jeremiaerzählungen in II Reg 18-20 und Jer 37-40* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 220.

¹¹⁶ For differing justifications of diaspora, and the Egyptian one in particular, in the Hellenistic period; see Bezael Bar-Kochva, *Pseudo-Hecataeus On the Jews: Legitimizing the Jewish Diaspora* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996), 232-248.

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prophesied blessings and mercy 'in your own land' through the hands of the Babylonians. 'All the people from the least to the greatest' (Jer 42:1) came to Jeremiah and asked him to inquire on their behalf about 'the way we should go, and the things that we should do' (Jer 42:3) and they subsequently promised that they would do everything that YHWH commanded them to do. The true downfall and the end of a hope and future associated with the people of the land in YHWH's restoration plan, is a consequence, narratologically, of the active rejection of YHWH's plans. This time the divine rejection is not the result of the failures of the king (Jer 15:4) but the result of the disobedience of all the remaining population in Yehud (cf. Jer 34:17).¹¹⁷

These empty-land passages in Jeremiah hold a nuanced view of the motif of the empty land; the land and the people in it are not rejected *per se* but they choose through their disobedience to remove themselves from the restorative remnant. This leaves only one conclusion to be drawn from the narrative in Jeremiah: the only obedient people were those who listened to YHWH and surrendered to the Babylonians; all other groups disqualified themselves owing to their disobedience.¹¹⁸ This might seem to affirm the theological view that the primary remnant was located in Yehud and the Babylonian *golah* only came to be its replacement after the action of the people of the land disqualified themselves. This is why Stipp even suggests that the appropriate title of these chapters could be 'narrative about the accidental/unintended primacy of the Babylonian *golah*' (*Erzählung vom unwillentlichen Vorrang der babylonischen Gola*).¹¹⁹ Ultimately it affirms, for the Babylonian *golah*, that the land is empty and desolate, if not historically, at least in terms of obedience to YHWH (cf. Jer 44:2).

¹¹⁷ Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 279. Stipp also points out that in the passages, a theologizing that answers the question of what led to this catastrophe is absent. The emphasis is not on the destruction of the kingdom but rather on, the remnant that left for Egypt.

¹¹⁸ Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 279; also Eric Peels, "The Assassination of Gedaliah," 100.

¹¹⁹ Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 284. Contra Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 325.

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The conclusion drawn from this is the *golah* is the only community left who could become YHWH's remnant. This point is not explicitly expressed in the text but is, nevertheless, a conclusion that the readers can make for themselves.¹²⁰ Theologically, the continuation of Israel's story must, therefore, originate in Babylon, among the *golah* community there. Two points counter such an interpretation. Firstly, the empty-land motif is a common biblical and ANE motif, therefore its origin need not lie in the Babylonian *golah*. Secondly, nowhere in Jeremiah is the point made, or hinted at, that the 597 *golah* is the only chosen diaspora community. The 597 *golah* does receive a special favour – undeserved divine mercy – but to extract from it a special chosenness is to stretch the evidence.

Jeremiah stresses that the emptiness of the land is only overcome when the diaspora (not the *golah*) returns from exile (Jer 32:37-44). The land that is 'a desolation, without man or beast' (Jer 32:43; 33:10-11) will finally be redeemed from chaos and returned to usefulness and productivity. A similar judgment was preserved in 2 Chr 36:17-21 and Lev 26:27-39. Aside from the fact that it is a theological, not a historical, construct, it also points to the 597 *golah* as being preserved not for their own sake but because they are the purified and sanctified remnant entrusted with re-populating Yehud with true worship. This mission, so vibrantly expressed in the numerous homeland missions preserved in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, is designed ultimately to influence the religious outlook of Yehud. Ezra-Nehemiah also stresses that it is not exclusively the *golah* in Babylon but the whole diaspora that is included in this salvific act.¹²¹

¹²⁰ A similar replacement theology is evident in Genesis, with the replacement of the natural chosen first born. 'An important recurring theme in Genesis is that God often overturns accepted practice and chooses, not the firstborn, but one of his brothers' (James McKeown, *Genesis*, 39). In the case of the remnant, the first born Yehud disqualified itself, thus highlighting the divine chosenness of later born sibling. This theology finds its most applicable forerunner in Joseph.

¹²¹ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 46-47.

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The book of Jeremiah only knows of one place in which divine mercy is already manifested on an undeserving community – Babylon.¹²² The Babylonians are, throughout the book of Jeremiah, continuously presented as the agent of YHWH's punishment.¹²³ Yet at the same time, the Babylonians are also portrayed as the *only* chance of survival for the people of Jerusalem, if only they submit to the king of Babylon (cf. Jer 21:9). The prophet's message finds its climax of hope in Jer 27:11 where it says, 'but any nation that will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave on its own land, to work it and dwell there, declares the LORD.' In the narratives of Jeremiah this promise remains unfilled, not because of a lack of ability of YHWH but because of the Judahites' continuous rebellion against divine counsel. This is then repeated immediately to Zedekiah the king of Judah, whom the prophet addresses directly:

Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people and live. Why will you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as the LORD has spoken concerning any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon. (Jer 27:12-13)

Salvation in Babylon lies exclusively in submission to the king of Babylon. Even those in Egypt would eventually come under Nebuchadnezzar's yoke, according to Jeremiah (Jer 46:2-26). YHWH declares that the rightful place for his people is in submission to a foreign ruler, not in open nationalistic rebellion. This theme of submission to foreign rulers is *the* re-occurring characteristic of all diaspora writings (Abraham in Genesis 14, Joseph, Esther, Daniel, Tobit). This indicates that the events that led

¹²² In his study on Jeremiah 1-25, Ronald E. Clements comes to the conclusion that Jeremiah 1-25 is deuteronomistic while Jeremiah 26-52 contains a modified political and theological outlook. He sees all hope resting in the return from Babylonian exile of both the 597 and 587 deportations; see Ronald E. Clements, "Jeremiah 1-25 and the Deuteronomistic History," in *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson* (ed. A. Graeme Auld; JSOTSup 152; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 93-113, esp. 109-110.

¹²³ Cf. Jer 20:4; 21:4, 21:7; 25:11, 27:6, and esp. 29:20.

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to the total destruction of Jerusalem and its population, the trauma of the 598 BCE destruction of state and temple, was blamed on those elements in society who resisted YHWH's command to submit. Thus, it is not surprising that the exilic redaction of the Deuteronomistic History has such a negative perception of the Israelite/Judahite monarchy.¹²⁴ The one outstanding characteristic of the foundation of the 597 *golah*, as narrated in 2 Kgs 24:10-16 and standing in the most vivid contrast to the bloody fate of Jerusalem as given in 2 Kgs 24:20b-25:21, is the surrender of the young King Jehoiachin to the Babylonians. In doing so, he saved himself, his entire family, the nobles of Judah and the city and the temple from destruction – and he also vindicates and exemplifies the message of Jeremiah: 'surrender and live' (Jer 38:17, 18, 21).

The book of Jeremiah further stresses that living under Babylonian rule was enjoyable and thus preferable for Judah and its people to living in Egypt or to perishing in an uprising.¹²⁵ After the defeat of Jerusalem, the explicit concern of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar for the well-being of Jeremiah is narrated to the Babylonian forces. They are instructed to 'take him, look after him well, and do him no harm but deal with him as he tells you' (Jer 39:12), emphasising that surrender to the Babylonians meant a positive future for those who submitted. It seems that the reason Jeremiah neglected the invitation to come to Babylon was to emphasise his own message: 'surrender and live/live well.'

¹²⁴ For a detailed discussion on the scholarly views of the exilic redactions of the Deuteronomistic History, see Thomas Römer and Albert De Pury, "Deuteronomistic Historiography," 24-141; Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 271-302; Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 272-359.

¹²⁵ This point was already noted by Ackroyd: 'as so often in Old Testament structures, the original material has been allowed to stand, and that original material shows a Jeremiah for whom hope lay in Gedaliah, in continued submission to Babylon, in Palestine. That view has been largely obscured by the restructuring of the narrative.' See Peter R. Ackroyd, "Historians and Prophets," *SEÅ* 33 (1968): 18-54, esp. 52 n 44, also Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 57.

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The divine anger towards and judgment on the Judahites also extends to the diaspora. The argument is made that the *golah*-redaction of Jeremiah is evidence for the tension and struggle for primacy between the Babylonian *golah* and the Egyptian diaspora.¹²⁶ The argument is based on the bad-fig motif in Jeremiah 24 but also on the condemnation of the Egyptian diaspora for idolatry in Jeremiah 44. Unfortunately, no clear reconstruction of the technicalities of such a tension within a group of non-centralised diaspora communities is given. A more fruitful endeavour is to view Jeremiah 44 as a continuation of the judgment oracles that move beyond the territorial borders of Yehud, specifically to include in continuous judgment the scattered diaspora. Jeremiah 44 excludes escape from judgment for those who fled to the diaspora-safe havens in Egypt. YHWH's judgment on his unfaithful covenant partner will continue regardless of their locality. There is no safety in Jerusalem, Yehud or in the scattered diaspora. The covenant curse is widened to include Judahite communities not only in Yehud but also beyond the territorial borders of Yehud.

Overall, the 597 *golah* takes a special place in the book of Jeremiah, not as the exclusively chosen and only remnant but as the first fruits of divine mercy - a community chosen to exemplify the divinely anticipated religious renewal. The term '*golah*,' used to describe the community, links it with a certain theological outlook associated with its exclusive chosenness. The so-called *golah*-favouring passages in Jeremiah do not portray a unique 597 *golah*-theology centred on its exclusive chosenness but rather, a theology that holds an inclusive view of all scattered Judahites to be potentially included in the restorative purposes of YHWH. For that reason, it is better to describe the theological outlook of the Babylonian '*golah*' as a diaspora-orientated (rather than a *golah*-orientated) theology.

¹²⁶ Ernest Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles*, 110-111.

3.4.1. The Historical Validation of Jeremiah's Message through Gedaliah

The Gedaliah account functions in a similar fashion in validating Jeremiah's message of well-being under Babylonian rule:

Likewise also all the Jews who were in Moab and among the sons of Ammon and in Edom, and who were in all the *other* countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant for Judah and that he had appointed over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan. Then all the Jews returned from all the places to which they had been driven away and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered in wine and summer fruit in great abundance. (Jer 40:11-12 NAS)¹²⁷

The Gedaliah episode has striking similarities with the account of King Jehoiachin's release from prison in Babylon. Both accounts describe restoration but not political restoration; in Jeremiah 40 a complete restoration and ingathering of 'all' Judahite exiles and in 2 Kgs 25:28 the restoration of the Judahite king to a place of prominence among other exiles. In both cases the framework of Babylonian overlordship is not questioned but rather the well-being and prosperity of those who choose to submit to the Babylonians is highlighted. Jeremiah 40 points to the abundant provision of fruit and wine, while 2 Kings 25 recalls Jehoiachin's daily provisions as a guest at the king's table. Only when the chance of peaceful co-existence under Babylonian overlordship is repeatedly rejected by King Zedekiah and his officials (Jer 37:15-21; 38:24-26), and only after the murder of Gedaliah (Jer 41:2), is the focus moved to the Babylonian *golah*. This confirms that acceptance of Babylonian overlordship is the only chance for national and personal survival.¹²⁸ Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the 597 *golah* and its

¹²⁷ The ESV translates the verb *dqp* (*paqid*) as governor in Jer 40:5, 7, 11, while the NAS (New American Standard Bible) rightfully translates it as 'appoint.' See also William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah. Vol 2* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 993; G. André, "פָּקִיד *pāqad*." *TDOT* 12:55-56.

¹²⁸ An alternative could be the de-territorialisation of religion, as Thomas C. Römer suggests for Jeremiah, wherein the Torah becomes the new land; see Thomas C. Römer, "How Did Jeremiah Become a Convert to Deuteronomistic

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descendants, according to the book of Jeremiah, were satisfied with accepting the status quo of Babylonian overlordship (at least for the time being).

Rainer Albertz sees the *golah* as a place in which feelings of religious nationalism preside. He assumes that the Babylonians, for reasons of national security, would have made it a priority to deport the supporters of religious nationalism and leave the supporters of their overlordship (e.g. Gedaliah, Baruch and Jeremiah) in Judah. Albertz is right to point out that in relation to the 597 *golah* in 594 BCE 'hopes blazed up among the deportees for a quick return, hopes that were still being fanned by prophets (Jer 29:21-23; cf. 28:2-4; Ezek 13:16)' ¹²⁹ He takes this to indicate that in the *golah* a feeling of religious nationalism survived, which then finds its climax in the collection of gold and silver for the coronation of Zerubbabel and Joshua (cf. Zech 6:9-15) in the restoration period. In response it can be said that there is good evidence for widespread religious nationalism in Jerusalem (cf. Jer 27:16; 37:17-20; 38: 27) in the period between 597 and the destruction of the temple. According to Ezra 1:4, all the offerings were exclusively for the temple and Zech 6:9-15 only describes the crown for the priestly Joshua, not for Zerubbabel. This would indicate that, at least in the process of theologizing about the purpose of the exile, the idea of national restoration was preserved for the day in the future when YHWH would gather the diaspora, lead them back and establish a new Israel.

Gedaliah is the last native leader of Judah before the land is emptied of its population.¹³⁰ No title is given for Gedaliah's office in Jeremiah and

Ideology?," in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 189-199, esp. 198. The question as to whether this shift to the Torah as a portable homeland can already be attested in the early Second Temple period must be verified by future research.

¹²⁹ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 282.

¹³⁰ Gedaliah was from the prominent biblical family of the Shaphanides. This family plays a prominent role in the discovery of the temple scroll in 2 Kings 22, the delivery of Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon (Jer 29:3), the rescue of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 36 and the governing of Yehud for the Babylonians (Jer

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there are still many questions about the true meaning of his position.¹³¹ For the current purpose it is enough to notice that he is the only leader of Judah, who was not of royal lineage. His short appointment over Judah was marked by peace, by the return and ingathering of the remnant of Israel (Jer 40:11),¹³² and by prosperity in the land. His period in office not only prompted the return to Yehud of Judahites who had fled to Moab, Ammon and Edom but in addition, 'all the Judeans returned from all the places to which they had been driven and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah' (Jer 40:12a). It is evident that under Gedaliah there is a change in fortunes for the distressed and dislocated impoverished Judean population. 'And they gathered wine and summer fruits in great abundance' (Jer 40:12b).¹³³

The unique characteristic of Gedaliah is that he followed the advice of the prophet Jeremiah and accepted Babylonian overlordship. He is a descendant of the pro-Babylonian Shaphanide family of court officials

40-41). Norbert Lohfink suggests that Gedaliah belonged to the group exiled in 597 BCE, which explained why the Babylonians trusted him; see Norbert Lohfink, "Die Gattung der 'Historischen Kurzgeschichte' in den letzten Jahren von Juda und in der Zeit des Babylonischen Exils," ZAW 90, no. 3 (1978): 319-347, esp. 336.

¹³¹ For a recent discussion, see Joel Weinberg, "Gedaliah, the Son of Ahikam in Mizpah: His Status and Role, Supporters and Opponents," ZAW 119, no. 3 (2007): 356-368.

¹³² Theologically and historically, this must exclude the 597 deportation.

¹³³ Mizpah became the capital of Yehud after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and remained so until perhaps even the time of Nehemiah. For a discussion and bibliography, see Oded Lipschits, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Process in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 19-52, esp. 35. For an archaeological survey of the biblical Mizpah, see Jeffrey R. Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh and the Problem of the Material Culture of the Sixth Century," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 413-447.

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and thus might well have been suited to a leadership role in Yehud.¹³⁴ Yet his naivety in not listening to advice given to him led to his murder and consequently to end of the nation in the land. The announcement of his submissive vassal policy: 'do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you' (Jer 40:9), closely follows Jeremiah's own council to King Zedekiah in Jer 27:7-17. Gedaliah's vision for leadership stands in stark contrast to the nationalistic restoration vision, so prevalent in Jerusalem and this ultimately led to his murder as the traitor of the national cause. Ackroyd has noted there is no condemnation in Jeremiah or Second Kings of Gedaliah's policy of cooperation with the Babylonians.¹³⁵ Jeremiah repeats the new divinely sanctioned form of Judean national submission after Gedaliah was murdered and fear strikes the newly ingathered remnant (Jer 42:9-22).

The story of Gedaliah's prudent submission takes a sharp turn when he ignores the repeated warnings from Johanan that Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, had sent Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, a military officer of royal descent, to murder him.¹³⁶ In 581 BCE Gedaliah is murdered by Ishmael, who escapes to the Ammonites (Jer 41:15). Ishmael's ferocious behaviour contrasts starkly with that of the Babylonian victors as he slays those present with Gedaliah, massacres a group of pilgrims en route to a temple and takes a mixed group of soldiers, women, children and eunuchs (Jer 41:17) captive in order to 'cross over to the Ammonites' (Jer 41:10).¹³⁷ The whole of Jeremiah 41 is dedicated to the

¹³⁴ Peter van der Veen, "Gedaliah ben Ahiqam in the Light of Epigraphic Evidence (A Response to Bob Becking)," in *New Seals and Inscriptions, Hebrew, Idumean and Cuneiform* (ed. Meir Lubetski; HBM 8; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 55-70, esp. 59.

¹³⁵ Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 57.

¹³⁶ Ammon was part of the anti-Babylonian alliance of Edom, Moab, Tyre, Sidon and Judah (cf. Jer 27). For the Babylonian treatment of Ammon, see Oded Lipschits, "Ammon in Transition from Vassal Kingdom to Babylonian Province," *BASOR* 335 (2004): 37-52.

¹³⁷ Eric Peels makes the following point, 'the people are being led into exile. The final stroke against Judah is delivered not by an enemy from outside, but

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description of the atrocity of Ishmael, which points to the importance attached to Gedaliah's assassination by a member of the royal lineage. A comparison between the Babylonian treatment of Judah and Ishmael's treatment of Judah leads to the rejection of Judahite rule in favour of the gentler Babylonian yoke.¹³⁸ The Babylonians did not kill the previous rulers; they did not slay pilgrims and led only the ruling class into captivity. The same cannot be said of Ishmael.

Furthermore, this chapter indicates the complete and total decline of the royal house of Judah/Israel. It also stands as a validation of the claim of Israel's last judge Samuel that kingship was not intended for the nation of Israel and that YHWH was Israel's only sovereign. Ishmael is 'chronologically' the last royal descendant of King David who tries to establish his rule in Judah before the exile. This all points to the final end of a Judahite/Israelite monarchy. It is also noteworthy that the book of Jeremiah, compared to 2 Kgs 25:30, offers a slightly different assessment of the last days of King Jehoiachin: 'A regular allowance was given him, by the king according to his daily need, *until the day of his death* as long as he lived (Jer 52:34, emphasis mine). The book of Jeremiah explicitly states the death of King Jehoiachin after the continuous beneficial treatment he received 'as long as he lived.' This again underlines Jeremiah's message: 'surrender and live' for it is better to live under Babylonian overlordship than to perish.

3.5. *Golah* Influence on Ezekiel

The book of Ezekiel, in its synchronic form, is the only direct biblical account of an eye-witness from the early exilic period. The first vision in the book (Ezek 1:2) is dated to the fifth year of the exile – 593 BCE. Ezekiel's last vision is recorded in 573 BCE.¹³⁹ Ezekiel is a member of the

by a member of its own Davidic royalty;' see Eric Peels, "The Assassination of Gedaliah," 92.

¹³⁸ For a similar assessment, see Christopher T. Begg, "The Significance of Jehoiachin's Release: a New Proposal," *JSOT* 36 (1986): 49-56, esp. 54.

¹³⁹ Moshe Greenberg also dates the book to that time; see Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* (AB 22; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 17.

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597 *golah*, the only known priest in any of the deportations. This could indicate that he was a member of the Jerusalemite priestly circle and although he was young (25 years old in 597 BCE according to Ezek 1:1), he was one of the officials at the royal court.¹⁴⁰

Ezekiel is the only named voice who speaks directly for (or for parts of) the Babylonian *golah* community. Ezekiel is not the official spokesperson for the deportees; he is not their endorsed representative. He is a prophet who calls for the reform of their behaviour and in his ministry he includes the *entire* deported community.¹⁴¹ This is an important distinction, which the suggested *golah*-redaction of Ezekiel does not make clear. Ezekiel speaks to the deportees (primarily of 597 but also of 587 BCE) but with regard to the reconstruction of the present study, this community is not the complete Babylonian *golah*. The relocation of the *golah* to Babylon does not nullify the divine judgments spoken against them. Ezekiel is described as having been called to prophesy to the wicked and rebellious house of Israel. In Ezek 2:3-8, the people are repeatedly described as: rebels (2:3), impudent and stubborn (2:4), a rebellious house (2:5-8). They have rebelled (2:3) and transgressed (2:3) and refuse to hear (2:5; 2:7). A similar devastating description of the people of the 597 *golah* is given in Ezek 33:31-32, in which their attitude towards the prophet is limited to the entertainment he provides. In Ezekiel's view, only those who seek YHWH are included in the (reformed) *golah* community.

Ezekiel's ministry carries striking resemblances to the ministry of Moses. A similar resemblance to the person of Moses can be found in another member of the Babylonian *golah* – Ezra.¹⁴² The similarities between Eze-

¹⁴⁰ The biblical books do not mention the deportation of any priests in 597 BCE. Thus, Ezekiel must have been included in the deportation of the officials (e.g. cf. 2 Kgs 24:12). It cannot be denied that the failure to mention priests in any deportation report may have another theological reason.

¹⁴¹ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles," 1.

¹⁴² For this reason it is not surprising that similarities between the Exodus and Ezra's mission have also been noted; see for example P. Abadie, "Le livre d'Esdras: un midrash de l'Exode?," *Transeu* 14 (1998): 19-31.

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kiel and Moses are their role as national political leaders, their transcendent vision of God, their receipt of divine Law on a mountain top and their description of the proportions and equipment of the temple.¹⁴³ This has led Lawrence Boadt to conclude that Ezekiel understood his ministry in the light of Moses delivering Israel out of slavery and leading them to a new land.¹⁴⁴ Moses is also the prophet who fundamentally reveals the character of YHWH and calls for a religious paradigm shift. His leadership is associated with a time of purification of the children of Israel in the wilderness before the reformed and purified members returned to the ancestral homeland. This comparison highlights the ultimate diaspora character of both Ezekiel and Moses as leaders who remained abroad and only pointed their people to a return in the future. Both Moses and Ezekiel play a significant role in the religious reformation of the nation.

The book of Ezekiel is indicative of the theologizing and reassessing of older theological paradigms within the early exilic community. Ezekiel's message, as found in its literal historical setting, exclusively addresses the deportees in Babylon and expects the repopulation of Yehud through this diaspora. Yet the book itself suggests that this was a learning process for Ezekiel. In Ezek 9:8 (cf. 11:3), the prophet cries to YHWH to spare the whole remnant of Israel from the outpouring of his wrath on Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that Ezekiel never applies remnant language to the Babylonian *golah* community, in contrast to Haggai and Zechariah. The divine glory departs from the temple in Jerusalem and leaves to the mountains east of Jerusalem (Ezek 11:23). Its destination or whereabouts during the period of exile is not reported in Ezekiel, though its return is expected in a reversal of its departure to the East

¹⁴³ Henry McKeating, *Ezekiel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 102. See also Lawrence Boadt, "Common View of Exile," 24, who notes it is 'notable in this regard is the prevalence of the formula in Ezekiel, "and they will know that I am Yahweh" (5:13; 6:10; 14:7; and some 30 times in all), or its variation, "And you will know that I am Yahweh" (6:7, 13; 7:4, 9; and some 21 times in all)...the formulae are found elsewhere only in the exodus traditions: Exod 7:5; 14:4, 18; 29:46 ("and they will know") and 6:1; 10:2, 16:6, 12 ("and you will know").'

¹⁴⁴ Lawrence Boadt, "Common View of Exile," 24-25.

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(Ezek 43:1-4). Jerusalem will not be spared and the whole remnant in the land will be scattered, leaving Yehud empty and desolate (Ezek 12:19-20; 33:27-29). Only after these visions does Ezekiel consider the reformed Babylonian *golah* key to the repopulation of Yehud.

The starting point for determining a study of the *golah* material is the work of Pohlmann, who writes extensively about the *golah* material in Ezekiel and has developed a model of the redactional history of Ezekiel (also of Jeremiah). Pohlmann identifies in Ezekiel passages that include other scattered diaspora communities besides the Babylonian *golah* in the salvific restoration promise of YHWH. He detects a diaspora-orientated redaction primarily in Ezekiel 20; 36:16-23a; 37:15-24 and Ezekiel 38-39. This redaction is especially notable in Ezekiel 20.¹⁴⁵ However, inclusion in the restoration in Ezekiel 20 is not, as Pohlmann claims, for the whole scattered diaspora. The emphasis is rather on those in the diaspora who live righteously before YHWH.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the LORD God. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me. I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. (Ezek 20:35-38)

Ezekiel focuses on those within both the deported community and other diaspora communities who follow the warnings of the prophets and reform their ways (cf. Ezek 12:16; 20:33-38). Ezekiel's repeated divine condemnations of the unreformed behaviour of the *golah* community, together with the inclusion of every diaspora community which is willing to listen to the divine words of religious and moral reform, points to the development of a *golah* community that is distinctly different from the general deported group of 597/587 BCE. Thus, the

¹⁴⁵ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 31.

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real *golah* exclusively contains members who follow the Ezekilian school of theology, independent of their geographical location.

A fundamental question with regard to understanding this earliest reformed Babylonian *golah* community is the question of the dating of the *golah* material in the book of Ezekiel. Pohlmann suggests that the initial prophetic book was reworked in two major steps. The first was the *golah*-orientated redaction at the end of the fifth century BCE; this was then followed by a diaspora-orientated redaction in the fourth century BCE.¹⁴⁶ The *golah*-orientated redaction favours the exclusive chosenness of the 597 *golah* community and this is primarily narrated in Ezekiel 8-11.¹⁴⁷ The diaspora-orientated redaction then broadens to incorporate the wider scattered diaspora, who are by redactional inclusion now also part of the divine restoration which has been promised. Notably, Pohlmann stresses that the inclusion of other scattered Judahite diaspora communities is a distinct redactional layer and not an intrinsic reflection of the exilic existence.

Pohlmann identified three main indicators in Ezekiel that testify to some form of *golah* influence on the preservation of the text. Firstly, all dates in Ezekiel follow the *golah* dating, beginning with their exile in 597 BCE (explicitly stated in Ezek 1:2; 33:21 and 40:1). Secondly, Ezekiel exclusively addresses the *golah* community at the Chebar Canal – this may have included a number of *golah* settlements along the Canal. However, members of the 587 deportation later join his audience. Thirdly, there is the elimination (here through death and scattering) of the entire population of Yehud and subsequent to this the *golah* is viewed as being a continuation of the expelled nation.¹⁴⁸ Thilo Rudnig adds a fourth *golah* characteristic, namely, salvation oracles that directly and exclusively address the Babylonian *golah*. He gleans the evidence for this from the idea of the exclusive chosenness of the *golah*, which builds on the total rejection of all other Judean communities (an idea that is present in Jeremiah but not in Ezekiel). On this basis, all salvation oracles after Ezekiel

¹⁴⁶ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 34.

¹⁴⁷ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 20.

¹⁴⁸ Ezekiel never uses the labelling 'remnant' for the *golah*.

34 are addressed to the *golah*. He also theorises a *golah*-redaction (second half of the fifth century BCE) that is chronologically followed by a diaspora-redaction (later part of the second half of the fifth century BCE).¹⁴⁹ In doing so he divides the salvation oracles based on whether they address the whole scattered diaspora (diaspora-redaction) or not (*golah*-redaction).

Pohlmann's reconstruction suffers from one major flaw in relation to Ezekiel: the book of Ezekiel does not contain an exclusive chosenness of the 597 *golah* over other diaspora communities. Here it seems that the *golah* theology of Jeremiah is influencing the interpretation of Ezekiel.¹⁵⁰ Pohlmann assumes that the empty-land motif in Ezekiel rejects all other Judean communities. Ezekiel 8:1-9:11 rejects the temple, the elders of the house of Israel and the whole city of Jerusalem. Ezekiel 10 describes the glory of YHWH rejecting the temple, the city and then retreating to the east (Ezek 11:23). Ezekiel 33:21-29 pronounces judgment on Jerusalem and everyone who remained in the land, thus establishing the total rejection of the city of Jerusalem, its inhabitants and the rest of the Judean population in the land. Therefore, Pohlmann is right to insist that the empty-land motif in Ezekiel completely rejects Jerusalem, its religious and political leaders and everyone else who remained. However, Pohlmann fails to point out distinct passages that reject other scattered diaspora communities (in the way that Jer 24:8 explicitly excludes all existing diaspora communities).¹⁵¹

Ezekiel shows a preference for the term 'Israel' when addressing, and ultimately defining, the reformed *golah* community (cf. Ezek 2:3; 3:17).¹⁵² On the whole, Ezekiel uses the term 'Israel' to include the

¹⁴⁹ Thilo Alexander Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan: Redaktionskritische Studien zu Ez 40-48* (BZAW 287; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 194-197, 241-242.

¹⁵⁰ The same criticism was raised by Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 350.

¹⁵¹ The book of Jeremiah directs all migration, following the Gedaliah assassination, to Egypt. Thus, in rejecting the Egyptian diaspora (narratively speaking), all other Judean communities are excluded.

¹⁵² Sara Japhet finds this wider diaspora concern in the late exilic work of Deutero-Isaiah, where the 'remnant' is 'Israel', 'Jacob' and the 'offspring of Abraham,' and not exclusively the 597 *golah*. See Sara Japhet, "People and

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deportees in Babylon, the Judahite community in Jerusalem (8:6; 9:8) and the wider scattered diaspora (36:21).¹⁵³ Ezekiel primarily limits the *golah* to 'true Israel,' which for him includes only those who hold to exclusive Yahwism and live according to its tenets.¹⁵⁴ The empty-land motif removes only the people from Yehud but does not eliminate scattered diaspora communities completely. For this reason it is difficult to maintain a clear cut distinction between *golah*-redaction and a later diaspora-redaction. The scattering and gathering seems rather to be intrinsic to the *golah*/diaspora perspective.

Pohlmann supports his claim of the exclusive chosenness of the 597 *golah* with the following passages: Ezekiel 11; 24:25-27 and 33:21ff.¹⁵⁵ However, all these passages only affirm that Ezekiel was chosen to minister to the 597 *golah* but they do not make any claim about the 597 *golah* being exclusively chosen. Ezekiel does not actively reject the 587 deportation (as Jeremiah does). The survivors of the 587 fall of Jerusalem will join the existing *golah* in Babylon as a sign of YHWH's righteous judgment on the wickedness of Jerusalem (Ezek 14:21-23). No real distinction is made between the 597 *golah* and the 587 deportation - both are condemned for their wickedness.¹⁵⁶ Pohlmann argues that

Land in the Restoration Period," in *Das Land Israel in biblischer Zeit* (ed. Georg Strecker; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 103-125, esp. 108-109.

¹⁵³ There are 158 references to the term 'Israel' in the book of Ezekiel.

¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Konrad Schmid and Odil Hannes Steck, "Restoration Expectations in the Prophetic Tradition of the Old Testament," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 41-81, esp. 47. But whether this should indicate a shift from 'Israel' being an ethnic entity to becoming a confessional entity, as Bob Becking argues, needs to be approached with caution; see Bob Becking, "Continuity and Discontinuity after the Exile: Some Introductory Remarks," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1-8, esp. 3; or Jonathan E. Dyck, "The Ideology of Identity in Chronicles," in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 89-116, esp. 105.

¹⁵⁵ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 28.

¹⁵⁶ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 30.

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Ezekiel's ministry as watchman for Israel is defined by a period of silencing (or suspension) of the ministry (Ezek 3:22-27). The period of silence lasts until the first survivors of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE reach the *golah* (Ezek 33:21-22). Ezekiel was prevented from being the watchman for the 597 *golah* but his installation as watchman also includes the 587 deportees. Pohlmann views this suspension as evidence for the diaspora-redaction, which changed the narrow 597 focus to include the wider diaspora.

Pohlmann is right to point out that the book of Ezekiel places special emphasis on the 597 *golah* but this does not automatically mean that all other diaspora communities are excluded. That which is true for Jeremiah is not necessarily true for Ezekiel. The empty-land motif in Ezekiel does not exclusively refer to the *golah* but refers to all scattered diaspora communities in the salvific restoration promise. This makes Pohlmann's distinction between a *golah*-favouring redaction and a subsequent diaspora redaction unnecessary. Unfortunately, it denies the 597 *golah*'s interest in other diaspora communities and also denies the book of Ezekiel a wider view of inclusion of diverse communities among the people of Israel.

Pohlmann suggests that it was likely that the original prophetic book was written in Palestine in the exilic period. The original book was subsequently updated through a *golah*-redaction, which he dates to the end of the fifth century BCE. This was followed by a number of diaspora-redactions during the course of the fourth century BCE.¹⁵⁷ Pohlmann gives the reason for the 597 *golah*-redaction as the struggle for control in post-exilic Yehud. He claims that the returnees under Zerubbabel used the exclusive chosenness of the 597 deportation to cement their claim for leadership in post-conflict Yehud.¹⁵⁸ However, it remains unclear how and why such a redaction was deemed necessary in the restoration period. Unfortunately, Pohlmann does not provide a detailed historical evaluation of the situation in Yehud following the

¹⁵⁷ Konrad Schmid also dates the *golah*-redaction of Jeremiah to the struggle for control in the restoration period in Yehud; see Konrad Schmid, "Manasse und der Untergang Judas," 97.

¹⁵⁸ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 28.

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return of Zerubbabel. This could have clarified how the *golah*-redaction of two books in Yehud, namely Ezekiel and Jeremiah, could have been used to convince the established local leadership of Yehud that prominence should be given to the returnees, who present two biblical books that gives them religious and political authority. Such a scenario overlooks that *golah*-returnees, in order to establish their leadership role, would most likely present the Persian imperial decree that announces that Zerubbabel is installed as the new governor of Yehud. Submission and obedience to the new governor is therefore assumed for all subjects. The decree would also point out that the rebuilding of the temple is under divine inspiration wanted, paid for and initiated by the Persian king (cf. Ezra 1:1-2, 4:3; 5:11-17; 7:25). Zerubbabel and Jeshua establish their authority over the people of Yehud simply by a reference to authority bestowed on them by the Persian king (Ezra 4:3, 5:11-17).

Pohlmann is not the only one to suggest that the historical situation addressed in this redactional layer in the book of Ezekiel should be dated to the restoration period.¹⁵⁹ Steven Shawn Tuell proposes a two-fold redactional model for Ezekiel 40-48 and views the final redaction as moulding Ezekiel 40-48 into the 'religious polity of the Judean restoration.'¹⁶⁰ He dates the redaction to the reign of Darius I, after the governorship of Zerubbabel and suggests that the term *aycn* (*nasiy'*) is used as a description of the Persian governor.¹⁶¹ Tuell proposed in light of the Persian religious imperial authorisation that Ezekiel 40-48 became the Torah for Yehud until it was substituted by Ezra's Torah.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Paul M. Joyce is an example of those who argue that Ezekiel 40-48 must have been written before the Second Temple was built sometime in the sixth century BCE; see Paul M. Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (LHBOTS 482; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 219.

¹⁶⁰ Steven Shawn Tuell, *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40-48* (HSM 49; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 14.

¹⁶¹ Steven Tuell, *The Law of the Temple*, 117-120. The term *aycn* (*nasiy'* – prince, ruler) is found in Ezekiel 40-48 numerous times (as well as throughout the book of Ezekiel), see Ezekiel 44:3; 45:7, 16, 17, 42; 46:2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18; 48:21, 22.

¹⁶² Steven Tuell, *The Law of the Temple*, 151.

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Ezekiel 40-48 is thus an exclusive Zadokite programme that signals to the Persian administration that no political ambitions exist in Yehud.

Tuell's suggestion has come under criticism for three reasons. Firstly, the use of the term *aycn* (*nasiy*) is unattested for the Persian governor in Yehud. Secondly, surprisingly, no credit is given to the Persian king who is assumed to be the imperial religious sponsor (cf. Isa 44:28; Ezra 1:1; 6:1). Thirdly, the absence of the high priest makes a dating in the exilic period more likely than one in the restoration period, a time when the presence of the high priests has been attested.¹⁶³ In addition, an origin of these passages in the *golah* does not need to take account of the religious reality of the high priest in Yehud, especially when an alternative religious organisation is preferred in Yehud.¹⁶⁴

Another significant interpretation comes from Rudnig, who stresses continuity in the redactional model and does not separate Ezekiel 40-48 from the previous chapters. He identifies the *Grundschrift* in Ezekiel 40-48 as belonging to the *golah*-redaction (identified by Pohlmann). The *golah*-redaction presents the land as completely devastated, with no '*Israelpotential*' for a continuation of the relationship with YHWH.¹⁶⁵ The layer addresses a conflict over land and leadership between returnees and the people in the land. The central themes are 'temple,' 'aycn' (*nasiy*) and 'land.' The temple is primarily considered a divine dwelling place ('*Wohnheiligtum*'). The *aycn* (*nasiy*) is a non-Messianic descendant of David who will be installed in the near future but whose role in Persian controlled Yehud is not yet clear. Only his cultic role is already defined.¹⁶⁶ Rudnig adds two interesting *golah* themes. Following from the complete and utter destruction ('*idelle Totalverwüstung*') of the

¹⁶³ Andrew Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 252; Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen* (BBB 129; Berlin: Philo, 2001), 273-274.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Jer 33:18 which envisions a diarchy between a descendant of David and a Levitical priest.

¹⁶⁵ Thilo Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan*, 345. Rudnig also wrote the Ezekiel 40-48 section in Pohlmann's second Ezekiel commentary, where he makes similar statements.

¹⁶⁶ Thilo Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan*, 347.

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land, Rudnig rightfully detects in Ezekiel 40-48 a programme for the future of the land, after its total demolition. The right conditions for living in the land must initially be restored. The two themes focus on the re-establishment of the temple cult and the fertility of the land. The two motifs, which are inter-related, are divine residency and the temple spring (*Gotteswohnsitz und Tempelquelle*). The temple spring heals the land and returns fertility to the desert and even life to the Dead Sea (Ezek 47:1-12).¹⁶⁷ This motif overturns the empty land configuration and re-establishes the potential for living in the land again.

Rudnig identifies the source of this *golah*-redaction as the descendants of the 597 deportation who returned under Zerubbabel and initiated the restoration. He dates the redaction some decades after the initial return to the first half of the fifth century BCE. Overall, he stresses the logical need for the 597 *golah* to develop a theological program that will undo the *tabula rasa* of the desolate and empty land. Although he dates the composition of this material to the exilic (or early post-exilic) period, it was incorporated into Ezekiel only as part of the *golah*-redaction.¹⁶⁸ Notably, Rudnig also theorises a diaspora-redaction that follows shortly after the *golah*-redaction in the second half of the fifth century BCE, in which the narrow focus of the 597 *golah* is widened to include the diaspora. The diaspora-redaction modifies the role of the *aycn* (*nasiy'*) in light of the crises over confiscation of property (Ezek 45:8b-9; 46:16-18 cf. Neh 5:1-5) and lays down a program of how to deal with the crises over land when the whole diaspora returns to Yehud. The egalitarian redistribution of tribal land is the diaspora's new paradigm of a territorial new beginning.¹⁶⁹ Rudnig also detects a stark criticism of the 597 *golah* community in the diaspora-redaction (Ezek 44:6-7). A major problem with Rudnig's interpretation is that there is no 597 *golah*-favouring in

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Zech 14:8-11. For a detailed discussion, see Thilo Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan*, 40, 166-175, 347-349.

¹⁶⁸ Thilo Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan*, 349.

¹⁶⁹ Thilo Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan*, 353-354.

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the book of Ezekiel, which makes his distinction between the two redactional layers unnecessary. The diaspora redaction contains less than thirty verses in eight chapters.¹⁷⁰

Michael Konkel also dates the *Grundschrift* (primary layer) of Ezekiel 40-48 to the exilic period, circa 562 BCE.¹⁷¹ This is followed by two *Fortschreibungen* (continuations). The first program introduces the idea of a restoration under a Davidide in the *Heilszeit*, as it dates after the disappearance of Zerubbabel and the *Golah* (am ha'arets – the people of the land) who are loyal to the Davidic dynasty. The borders of the new land (Ezek 47:15-20) mirror the north-south borders from the time of the inauguration of the first temple (1 Kgs 8:65); thus the new Israel is conceived in continuity with the ideal cult community.¹⁷² The boundaries of the land define it in its ideal promised boundaries (cf. Numbers 34), in so far as they exclude the settlements East of the Jordan (Ezek 47:20).¹⁷³ The division of the land (Ezek 48:1-29), in which each tribe receives an equal-sized allotment, is deemed good because of its utopian character, conceivable only in the setting of a new beginning.¹⁷⁴ The second continuation is dated to the mid-fifth century BCE and is marked by the prominence of the Zadokite priests. Konkel goes so far

¹⁷⁰ Ezek 43:7b-9; 44:6-7; 45:8b-9; 46:16-18 and 47:13aβγ.14.15a.21; 48:1-8αα.23b-29; see Thilo Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan*, 351.

¹⁷¹ Margaret S. Odell highlights in her commentary the similarity between the temple vision in Ezekiel 40-48 and that of Esarhaddon's Babylonian temple rebuilding inscriptions which are dated to around 680 BCE; see Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 483-484.

¹⁷² Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen*, 282.

¹⁷³ Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen*, 210.

¹⁷⁴ It is also suggested that the utopian character of the 'draft constitution' of the egalitarian society in Ezekiel 40-48 is a critique of the Persian period temple; see for example the issues raised by Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 374-375 or the comments about this by Paul Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, 219-220. For Joyce it seems unlikely that Ezekiel 40-48 is a critic of a temple already inaugurated. If this were the case then these accounts surely would have accommodated the new reality in some tangible form.

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as to describe the cultic law in Ezekiel 44-46 as Zadokite halakha.¹⁷⁵ Another aspect of this layer is its xenophobia, which finds its key expression in Ezek 44:6-9, where all foreigners are banned from the temple. Konkel locates this in the post-exilic period when Nehemiah threw Tobiah, described in the book as an Ammonite (Neh 2:10), out of his temple quarters (Neh 13:8). Konkel also detects an ongoing cultic concern regarding the prohibition of mixing both the profane and the holy and the most holy and the holy (*Verbot der Mischungen*).¹⁷⁶

Both Konkel and Rudnig have made important contributions to recent studies of the book of Ezekiel. Konkel rightfully highlights some important themes in Ezekiel 40-48 and points to their theological, rather than historical, nature. A prime example is the merging of the boundaries and the division of the land, used to create continuity between the former ideal cult community and the new community. Rudnig rightly highlights the importance of the restoration of the land in order to enable living in it (the turning around of the empty-land motif). He also stresses the idea of divine residency in the temple that will lead to the renaming of Jerusalem as 'YHWH is here' (Ezek 48:35). The temple spring nurtures, heals and fertilises the land. However, the realisation of the ideal theological nature of these passages limits the likelihood of identifying an actual historical correspondence in post-exilic Yehud. The very theological or symbolic nature of these accounts suggests that they were not written with a specific historical account in mind but rather, as a theological description of the ideal cult community. These developments are located not in the presence of the writer but point persistently to the future. The strongest argument against a dating in the restoration period in Yehud is the lack of references to the role and function of the high priest in the post-conflict society.

The question must be asked as to whether the locating of the *golah*-redaction of Ezekiel in early post-exilic Yehud points to a conflict between returnees and the people of the land. All other biblical narratives that describe the situation in early post-exilic Yehud, Haggai,

¹⁷⁵ Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen*, 347.

¹⁷⁶ Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen*, 350-351.

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Zechariah and the book of Ezra, do not report a conflict between returnees and the people of Yehud. There is no record of such a conflict in Ezra in the early post-exilic period. Ezra reports conflicts between the *golah* returnees and the people of the land in the later period (Ezra 6:21) but is silent about the period of the initial return.¹⁷⁷ Pohlmann's view is that the *golah*-redaction in Ezekiel does not have a programmatic divine oracle (similar to Jeremiah 24) that would convince any listener of the exclusive divine chosenness of the returnees over against the people in the land. Throughout the *golah*-favouring book of Ezra, pronouncements that they are carrying out a divine mission are prominently placed and repeated via both Ezra and the voice of the imperial administration. Ezra 1:1-2 makes it plain that the Persian king was divinely chosen to inaugurate and command the return to rebuild the temple. Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the elders simply reject any interference with 'as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us' (Ezra 4:3, similarly 5:11-17). So the people return, the temple is rebuilt and is in proper use, according to what 'is written in the Book of Moses' (Ezra 6:18). At this point in the narrative the religious cult is completely restored.

Only then does Ezra arrive. His imperial commissioning is narrated and his claim of authority is recorded as follows:

And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. And those who do not know them, you shall teach. Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment. (Ezra 7:25-26)

Ezra has in his possession an imperial letter that grants him rights over the community and its internal affairs in Yehud. It also carries the threat of punishment, since Ezra's teaching carries imperial backing. The imperial letters (Ezra 1 and 7) also carry with them economic and financial

¹⁷⁷ The conflict about the rebuilding of the temple is reported on continuously as a result of interferences from the people of Samaria (Ezra 4:2, 17).

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resources, which will surely convince the people in a post-conflict situation of the great advantages of an association with the returnees. On the whole, the locating of the supposed *golah*-redaction in post-exilic Yehud gives an accurate reflection of the sociological reality in Yehud as a change of leadership from an indigenous Yehudian to a divinely-authorised returnee leadership is addressed. However, another historical scenario needs to be considered with regard to the presence of *golah*-favouring material in Ezekiel.

There is a further problem with the supposed *golah*-redaction and its association with the return under Zerubbabel. The *golah* community in Babylon does not cease to exist at this point but continues to be in Babylon and also continues to influence Yehud. The political elite of the Babylonian *golah* returned to Yehud under Zerubbabel in the end of the fifth century BCE in order to expand their legitimate right to rule again over Yehud. The religious elite returned at the same time under the high priest Joshua, son of Jehozadak (Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4; Zech 3:1, 8) who has a prominent role in early post-exilic Yehud (Zech 6:11). Yet in Ezekiel (and Jeremiah) the office of the high priest is not mentioned. This silence is surprising as the *golah*-redaction assumes that the original prophecy was changed to highlight the fact that a descendants of King Jehoiachin will be planted on the mountain of Israel (Ezek 17:22-23) in order to cement the political and religious claim of the 597 *golah*.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, it seems incomprehensible that the 597 *golah* would have tried to bring legitimacy to the political leader but not to the equally important religious leader: the high priest.¹⁷⁹ For this reason, the dating of the *golah*-redaction in the early restoration period cannot be upheld.

Furthermore, it is unclear as to how, after the return of the political and religious heads of the *golah*, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the Babylonian *golah* could have maintained legitimacy in its own right. The book of

¹⁷⁸ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 28.

¹⁷⁹ Steven Tuell acknowledges that this argument points against a dating in the restoration period. He suggests, unconvincingly, that when Zerubbabel lost his imperial endorsement and disappeared, the closely related Joshua also disappeared; see Steven Tuell, *The Law of the Temple*, 147.

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Ezra culminates in the arrival of Ezra with the Torah, which demonstrates, narratively speaking, that religious authority and primacy was still provided by the *golah* community in Babylon.¹⁸⁰ It is hard to imagine a scenario in which a higher religious authority than the high priest could have been located in the Babylonian *golah*.

An alternative scenario is that the *golah* (at this stage priestly-led and likely to have been associated with the Zadokites) rejected the office and person of the high priest. The books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah do not make mention of a high priestly role. The attitude of the *golah* could be understood from the portrayal of Joshua, the high priest in Ezra. Firstly, his name is given as Jeshua and secondly, his title is not recorded.¹⁸¹ Therefore, it is possible that the *golah* had a temple focus but were not in favour of the high priestly office and those who held this office.¹⁸² Ezra is linked to the high priestly line but more importantly he is a descendant of Aaron (Ezra 7:5). The role of Ezra does not evoke in action or speech the office of the high priest but rather, the office of teacher of the Torah.

In Ezekiel the 597 *golah* does not receive a complete *carte blanche* of election, as it does in the book of Jeremiah. Ezekiel faces certain difficulties: 'you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not, for they are a rebellious house' (Ezek 12:2 cf. also Ezek 2:3, 5-8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3). Ezekiel's audience is explicitly the 597 *golah*. Thus, it can be concluded that for Ezekiel, the 597 *golah* was in need of religious reform. Ezekiel's future hope lies with a reformed *golah* based on divine standards. This is why he is able to include the 587 deportees (the reformed *golah*). Ezekiel stresses the sinfulness and rebellion that needs to be overcome by the exiled community in order to qualify for inclusion in restoration to the land. The attitude of acceptance of

¹⁸⁰ Ezra is linked in 7:5 to the high priestly line of Seraiah and to Aaron as the first priest.

¹⁸¹ Ezra 3:2 indicates that Jeshua was at least a priest.

¹⁸² Michael Konkel also points out that the priests were not a homogenous group; see Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen*, 355.

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foreign rule is also traceable in the passages in Ezekiel, as will be demonstrated in the ensuing discussion and in the biblical corpus that can be classified as diaspora novellas.¹⁸³

A final question must be asked as to whether the returnees under Zerubbabel and the *golah* in Babylon belong to the same community. It is problematic that an intrinsic part of the *golah* theology holds that the shift from the time of damnation to the age of salvation (*Unheilszeit zu Heilszeit*) can only begin when the *golah* returns.¹⁸⁴ Thus far the basic assumption is that members of the *golah* returned under Zerubbabel. The available sources for such an investigation are primarily the historical memories and its theological assessment in the early restoration period in the books of Haggai/Zechariah and Ezra.¹⁸⁵ These three books are in agreement about one incident only: that Zerubbabel and Joshua laid the foundation of the temple. Surprisingly, Haggai and Zechariah do not narrate or refer to a return from Babylon, they do not use *golah* terminology to describe the community and they do not seek to establish continuity between pre-exilic and post-exilic Yehud (the book of Ezra does all these things). Ezra presents the return decree as a temple restoration only (Ezra 1:3) and not as the second exodus from captivity. Haggai and Zechariah include every person in Yehud in the remnant of the people (no indication of a struggle or divisions in the society) and all people work in unity with the political and religious leaders (Hag1:12, 14; 2:2; Zech 8:6, 12, 14). Haggai 1:12 and 14 even refer to the people present as the 'whole remnant.' The book of Ezra only applies the term 'remnant' (Ezra 9:8, 13, 14, 15) to the community after the imperial administration decreed a general return (Ezra 7:13 not just for the rebuilding of the temple) and this community arrived in Yehud under Ezra's leadership. The temple completion is promised to Zerubbabel (Zech 4:9) but the actual finishing of the temple and the re-installment

¹⁸³ Cf. Joseph and Pharaoh in Genesis 39-50, Esther and King Ahasuerus in Ester 7-9, Daniel and Darius in Daniel 6.

¹⁸⁴ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 27.

¹⁸⁵ My assumption is that both Haggai and Zechariah reflect a historical reality quite close the actual events. The book of Ezra in its current form seems like an edited, *golah*-favouring document.

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of worship is not recorded in Haggai nor in Zechariah. Ezra 6 also does not explicitly credit Zerubbabel (his name is omitted in the report) with the finishing of the temple. The books of Haggai and Zechariah link Zerubbabel with his governorship and Joshua with his high priestly office. In the retelling in Ezra, both lose their titles and thus their claim to the legitimate rule of Yehud.¹⁸⁶ In the book of Ezra, Ezra is the only person connected to the high priestly line (Ezra 7:1); he is endorsed with wide-ranging imperial authority for Yehud and beyond. Overall, the accounts show a substantial difference and only minimal continuity between the worldviews of these two groups.¹⁸⁷ Thus, it seems fair to deny the *golah* any active involvement in (or endorsement) of the return under Zerubbabel and Joshua.¹⁸⁸

3.6. Conclusion

The findings of this chapter show that the motif of the empty-land cannot simply be associated with the Babylonian *golah* due to its widespread biblical and ANE use. The *golah* does not portray the year 538 BCE as the end of exile or the return under Zerubbabel as constituting a new exodus. The *golah* (in its nature as a diaspora community) views both events as only partially fulfilled and awaits their fuller fulfilment in the future. Pohlmann's theorised *golah*-redaction of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel does not portray the Babylonian 597 *golah* as the only chosen community of exiled Judahites. The 597 *golah* has received a prominent place in Jeremiah 24 because of the undeserved divine mercy that was shown to this rebellious group. As the receiver of mercy, the 597 *golah* demonstrates to the scattered diaspora that YHWH will remember his

¹⁸⁶ Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen*, 278.

¹⁸⁷ Bob Becking also detects in the book of Ezra among the returnees in Yehud different groups; see Bob Becking, "Ezra's Re-enactment of the Exile," esp. 58.

¹⁸⁸ It suited the *golah* to use both Zerubbabel and Joshua as examples of the positive influence and the ongoing concern for Yehud of the *golah* community in Babylon. This is especially evident in the *golah*-favouring editing of the book of Ezra.

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people. The *golah* community is in essence and outlook one of the scattered diaspora communities that awaits its restoration. Nowhere in Ezekiel or Jeremiah does the 597 *golah* community receive a general *carte blanche* of election. YHWH's restorative purposes are always bound up with those inside the community who undergo the necessary religious reform – the reformed 597/587 *golah*.

For investigations of the *golah* community, it is important to establish the right order of the *golah*-favouring and diaspora-favouring passages in both Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Where priority is given to Jeremiah, the *golah* moves from an exclusive chosenness to a broader inclusion of other scattered diaspora communities. When priority is given to Ezekiel, then the earliest *golah* is inclusive of communities in other locations but becomes exclusive through time. Thus, the historical reconstruction should start with the prophet Ezekiel calling for reform inside the 597 *golah* and other diaspora communities;¹⁸⁹ a message that must have found receptive hearers and doers, especially among the exiled temple-less priestly and levitical factions.

¹⁸⁹ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles," 1-45; also Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 160.

Chapter 4: The *Golah*

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will attempt to understand the event of 'exile' not from the perspective of the province of Yehud and its inhabitants but through the lenses of the *golah* community in Babylon (and in the wider Babylonian-Elamite diaspora). Chapter 2 established a definition of diaspora based on sociological/anthropological diaspora research and reviewed the archaeological findings relating to the earliest diaspora groups in Mesopotamia in the pre-Hellenistic period. Chapter 3 looked at the use of the motif of the empty land and the biblical presentations of the return from exile and the *golah* influences on Jeremiah and Ezekiel. This chapter will start with a suggestion as to who the *golah* is, before addressing the question of the theologizing of the concept of exile by the *golah* community. This is followed by a discussion of the nature of the restoration envisioned by the *golah* and some concluding comments about the lack of a distinct diaspora theology.

Manfred Weippert points out a problem in relation to the presentation of the history of Israel that is at the same time applicable to the study of the exilic period. The point he raises is that all interpretation is undertaken and all historical judgment made with the theology of Deuteronomy as the starting point.¹ For the study of the exilic period, usually prominence is given in interpreting the deuteronomistic idea of exile as punishment. Such a presupposition requires justification especially in light of our increased understanding of the development of pre-

¹ 'Es handelt sich bei diesen Darstellungen im Grunde sämtlich um "post-" oder besser "subdeuteronomistische" Geschichtswerke.' [These presentations are essentially 'post' or preferable 'subdeuteronomic' historical works.] (see Manfred Weippert, "Geschichte Israels am Scheideweg," *ThR* 58 (1993): 71-103, esp. 73). Similarly, B. J. Diebner, "Die Bedeutung der mesopotamischen 'Exilsgemeinde' (galut) für die theologische Prägung der jüdischen Bibel," *Transeu* 7 (1994): 123-142, esp. 123-126. He also points out that many biblical interpreters tend to interpret the Hebrew Bible exclusively in light of the biblical traditions that favour Judah thereby assuming a Judah-centered view.

exilic Judaism. Deuteronomy is the book that establishes the fundamental importance of return from exile as restoration.² Therefore, it is argued that the restoration community in Yehud understood their return from exile as *the* promised second-exodus, although it is clear that Ezra-Nehemiah do not view those who remained in the diaspora as disobeying and resisting YHWH. Ezra 1:2 makes it clear that Cyrus only promises a partial restoration – only to build the temple – and that all those who returned were ‘stirred’ by YHWH to go (Ezra 1:5). This leaves space for alternative expressions of Yahwism in the diaspora.

For the reconstruction of the world of the early Persian period diaspora, two witnesses are widely influential in shaping the discussion. There is the well-documented life of the Judean garrison in Elephantine, with its ‘syncretistic’ mix of Yahwism and Canaanite deities.³ The problem arising out of the use of Elephantine as the ‘prime example’ of life in the diaspora is that the form of poly-Yahwism is ‘pre-deuteronomistic’ and might not be a result of syncretism in a foreign land at all. It might simply

² See E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations: A New Approach to the Formation of the Pentateuch* (SemeiaSt 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 166. See also Ernest Nicholson’s *Deuteronomy and the Judaean Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), especially 41-73, where he argues that Deuteronomy originates from the Judean diaspora in Babylonia.

³ Karel van der Toorn argues that the deities worshipped at Elephantine, namely Anat-Yahu and Anat-Bethel, originate from members of the garrison in northern Israel; thus, their religion is Israelite in form; see Karel van der Toorn, "Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine," *Numen* 39, no. 1 (1992): 80-101. The Elephantine correspondence highlights the general conservative nature of a diaspora community, as Pesach, Sabbath and temple worship are central elements in the religious outlook of the community. However, it must be said that these practices in Elephantine are not Deuteronomistic. For a detailed discussion of the nature of Yahwistic/syncretistic worship, see Bob Becking, "Die Gottheiten der Juden in Elephantine," in *Der eine Gott und die Götter: Polytheismus und Monotheismus im alten Israel* (ed. Manfred Oeming and Konrad Schmid; ATANT 82; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2003), 203-226, also Karel van der Toorn, "Herem-Bethel and Elephantine Oath Procedure," *ZAW* 98, no. 2 (1986): 282-285.

be a form of pre-exilic-Judahite/Israelite Yahwistic-syncretistic religion that is also evident from the condemnation by the pre-exilic prophets of such practice in the land of Israel. The other witness, which has a heavy bearing on the discussion about the diaspora, is the text of Ezra 9-10 – the separation of the foreign wives. This is taken to imply that diaspora religion is a narrow, exclusive, xenophobic religion that promotes exclusion on the basis of ethnic origins. This is not to suggest that diaspora communities could not hold to such a worldview but merely to state that the literary context of Ezra 9-10 describes an inter-group conflict between the ‘sons of the exile’ (hlwgh ynb – *bene hagoglah*) and the ‘people of the land’ (6rah μ[- *am haerets*) for the exclusive right of shaping the religious outlook of post-destruction Yehud. The most-convincing interpretation is to view Ezra 9-10 as employing a repatriate, ingroup perspective.⁴ This means that Ezra’s xenophobic speech is not addressed to a real intermarriage situation but rather addresses the ‘sons of the exile’ who married local women from ‘the people of the land’⁵ who do not share their true and exclusive Yahwistic

⁴ See Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology," where she highlights that the conflict is an ‘in-group conflict’ among the returnees. This provides a less negative, xenophobic reading of Ezra, though the issue of separation and ‘self-segregating’ remains nevertheless. See also Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Development of Jewish Sectarianism from Nehemiah to the Hasidim," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschits, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 385-404, esp. 395. The charge of being xenophobic could still be levelled against Nehemiah, who has an exclusive national-Judean mindset (which might be a reason for the tension with the Jerusalemite population, who holds to a more inclusive Israel-concept); for a stimulating treatment, see Gary N. Knoppers, "Nehemiah and Sanballat: The Enemy Without or Within?," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschits, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 305-331.

⁵ For this argument, see especially Tamara C. Eskenazi and Eleanore P. Judd, "Marriage to a Stranger in Ezra 9-10," in *Second Temple Studies: 2. Temple Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards; JSOTSup 175; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 266-285. See also Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "The Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10 and

outlook. Kenton L. Sparks points out that the biblical witness is not *per se* against foreign people but that it is against foreign practices alien to Yahwism.⁶

One group's view of the restoration period is well documented in the main source for the period, the book of Ezra-Nehemiah: the community of the 'returned exiles.'⁷ This community builds its identity primarily on the exile, as can be seen in their self-description/self-understanding as 'the ones coming up from exile/*golah*' (hlwgh ybvm מַלְכָּה – *haolim mishbiy hagolah* - Ezra 2:1, Neh 7:6). But also 'the sons of Israel returning from the exile/*golah*' (hlwghm מַבְּנֵי לָרֶגֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל – *bene Yisrael hassabim mehagolah* - Ezra 6:21) and 'the ones coming out from captivity' (ybvhm מַבְּנֵי חַבְּיִים – *habayim mehashbiy* - Ezra 3:8). More common are the designations, 'the exile/*golah*' (hlwgh – *hagolah* - Ezra

Nehemiah 13: A Study of the Sociology of Post-Exilic Judaeon Community," in *Second Temple Studies: 2. Temple Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards; JSOTSup 175; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 243-265, esp. 257, who summarises the problem: 'essentially, the *only* basis for Ezra's objection is that the foreigners were simply Jews who were not in exile.' In a different article he states that 'the strongest argument for this is the nature of the terms used, and especially the term "Canaanite": the women with whom these "mixed" marriages were sealed are identified partially with old terms that almost surely have become *stereotypically pejorative slurs* referring to those ethnic groups who have long since either disappeared or assimilated, but who were condemned historically as those unclean peoples "justifiably" destroyed by Joshua ...' See Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Between Ezra and Isaiah: Exclusion, Transformation and Inclusion of the "Foreigner" in Post-exilic Biblical Theology," in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 117-142, esp. 126. For a discussion of whether these 'foreign' women were afterwards actually divorced; see Tamara Cohen Eskenazi, "The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 509-529.

⁶ Kenton Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 323.

⁷ A number of exilic communities share the unifying concept (though ahistorical for *all* its members) of a shared origin in exile; see for example, Anna Arnone, "Journeys to Exile: The Constitution of Eritrean Identity Through Narratives and Experiences," *JEMS* 34, no. 2 (2008): 325-340, esp. 326.

1:11; 9:4; 10:6; Neh 7:6) or 'the sons of the exile/*golah*' (hlwgh ynb – *bene hagolah* - Ezra 4:1; 6:19,20; 8:35; 10:8, 16), 'the sons of exile/*galut*' (atwlg ynb – *bene haglut* - Ezra 6:16), 'the assembly of the exile/*golah*' (hlwgh lhq – *qahal hagolah* - Ezra 10:8 cf. 2:64 also Neh 5:13; 7:66; 8:2, 17), 'the assembly of God' (myhlah lhq – *qahal haelohim* - Neh 13:1), or more exclusively 'the holy seed' (vdqh [rz – *zera haqodesh* - Ezra 9:2). These self-definitions highlight the importance of the theologized exilic experience for the group itself, where they may have seen a similarity to the period of purification in wilderness of the exodus-generation. This self-description also points to a theologizing in relation to the idea of exile as punishment and annihilation. A chosen community is preserved in Babylon. This theology helps the returnees and is continually fuelled by the repeated homeland missions to assert their religious priority in relation to every other group.⁸

Not only was the exile highly disruptive for the exiles but it was also theologically confusing. Their presence in a foreign land, especially for the generations born in exile, was accompanied by re-theologizing and adapting to their own situation. To ensure continuity, the Babylonian *golah* looked for guidance and answers among their numerous priestly exiles.⁹ The exile not only destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, it also undermined the exiles' established political and religious foundations.¹⁰

The exilic calamity prompted differing responses in the newly stateless Judahites. This study is primarily interested in the mindset of the *golah* community in Babylon who experienced and theologized differently from the majority of Judeans who stayed behind in their homeland. Joel Weinberg, a Jewish Latvian scholar raised in the Soviet Union, made the following helpful observation in regard to a differing mindset and worldview between the *golah* community in Babylon and the Judeans

⁸ See Sara Japhet, "People and Land in the Restoration Period," 112.

⁹ For a differing interpretation of exile and restoration in the book of Chronicles, see Sara Japhet, "Exile and Restoration in the Book of Chronicles," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 33-44.

¹⁰ Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 16.

in Babylonian Yehud. He suggests that the attitude of the Yehudites centres on the hope of the renewal of everything that was lost through the exile and occupation, namely the return of the exiles, gaining control of the land, the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of the Davidic monarchy. This is an orientation towards continuity. The *golah*, on the other hand, is characterised by a distinct orientation of discontinuity of which there is most evidence in Ezekiel 40-48. The vision expressed there points to innovations, namely the strict separation of the secular/political and social/cultic areas and radical changes in the role and function of the leader of the people.¹¹ In general, the reflections over the destroyed state of Judah and the vision of a new beginning show distinct differences in outlook between the *golah* and the people of Yehud.

In this study, I will attempt to suggest some ways of uncovering the prevailing mindset of the reformed Babylonian 597/587 *golah* community in their early exilic configuration. What is apparent is that the exilic experience and new insights gained while interacting with a different lead culture (e.g. Babylonian, Persian) prompted distinct diasporic responses that varied from the response of those who experienced Babylonian and Persian colonial rule on homeland soil. This study focuses on the general, traceable concepts in the writings (or redactions) associated with the Babylonian *golah* – Ezekiel, Jeremiah and the *golah*-favouring redactional layer in 2 Kings. It is evident that different authors had different ideas and focuses and also, that the theologizing following the calamity is a process that is likely to have taken a few generations or had to be worked through by a few different thinkers inside the Mesopotamian diaspora. Future research might be able to develop a historically accurate picture of the theological developments inside the *golah* and the extent of influence of one biblical witness over another.

In the reconstruction of the *golah* the question of the origin and dating of the material in the books is paramount. A further question is for which books might a redaction only have been conceivable in Babylon? This study has argued that the reconstructed *golah*-focus of both Ezekiel

¹¹ For a full discussion, see Joel Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple-Community* (JSOTSup 151; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 130-131.

and Jeremiah is not as prominent as previously thought. Nevertheless, the 597 *golah*-focus in Jeremiah 24 gives the *golah* community in Babylon prominence in YHWH's restorative purposes but does not have an exclusive position over and above the population of Yehud. The setting of the book of Ezekiel in the *golah* and Ezekiel's exclusive ministry to the community points to its origin in the *golah*.¹² In order to understand the theological mindset of the Babylonian *golah*, the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel must be consulted, as both books preserve unique prophetic traditions that address the *golah*-diaspora paradigm in one way or another. The choice of these prophetic works is based on their explicit orientation towards the *golah* community.¹³ This will allow some insights into the theological struggle of the early *golah* community in Babylon. The presence of 'historical artefacts' in the texts, which favour the Babylonian *golah* over and above a remnant in the homeland and the Egyptian diaspora, points to a definitive, or at least redactional, early influence of the *golah* community on these prophetic works. For this reason, the exilic diasporic works of Second-Isaiah,¹⁴ 2 Kings 24-25,¹⁵ and the later Ezra-Nehemiah corpus are not discussed here in

¹² The fact that portions of the book of Ezekiel address an audience in Jerusalem was taken to mean that Ezekiel had at some stage ministered in Jerusalem. Only subsequently was the exilic location added to his prophecies by some of his disciples. For a discussion of this view; see Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 7-10. Overall, the book in its current form portrays a *golah* audience (cf. Ezek 12:11; 14:22-23).

¹³ This aspect of chosenness for the 597*golah* cannot be underestimated as their chosenness was crucial for their ethno-religious survival in a foreign land. For this concept, see Anthony D. Smith, "Chosen People: Why Ethnic Groups Survive," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15, no. 3 (1992): 436-456, esp. 440-441.

¹⁴ Christopher R. Seitz also concludes that Deutero-Isaiah is distinctly different from the *golah*-traditions found in Ezekiel, Jeremiah and 2 Kings 24; see Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 103, 296.

¹⁵ Konrad Schmid, "Manasse und der Untergang Judas," 94-99. See also Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 164-202, who argues for 2 Kings 24 as the original end to the DtrH (p. 202) and 2 Kings 25 as being an exilic redaction (p. 192).

great detail, because they lack the explicit address to and direct interest in the Babylonian *golah* community.

4.2. The *Golah* – a Suggestion

This section attempts to provide a comprehensive suggestion as to the identity of the *golah*. In doing so it guards against such generalized readings of the earliest diaspora as:

- the Judahite diaspora is syncretistic because in Elephantine foreign gods were worshipped;¹⁶

¹⁶ See Piotr Lorek, "Motif of Exile in the Hebrew Bible: An Analysis of a Basic Literary and Theological Pattern" (PhD diss., University of Wales, Lampeter, 2005), 219. For the viewpoint of living in a foreign land being followed 'naturally' by the worship of foreign deities, with particular reference to Judahites in the Persian period; see Glenn Bowman, "'Migrant Labour': Constructing Homeland in the Exilic Imagination," *Anthropological Theory* 2, no. 4 (2002): 447-468, esp. 453. For a detailed criticism of such a view, see Bob Becking, "Die Gottheiten der Juden in Elephantine," esp. 225-226. From the Elephantine correspondence only two examples of syncretism are known. In *TADAE* B2.8 a dispute between the Egyptian Pia, son of Pahi, and Mibtahiah, daughter of Mahseiah son of Jedania, is settled and Mibtahiah swears an oath by the Egyptian goddess Sati. *TADAE* B2.2 contains a dispute between two Judahite parties (one of them Mibtahiah's father) which is settled by an oath sworn to YHW. In the Elephantine correspondence an oath is twice evoked to settle a dispute - when all parties are Judahite the deity is YHW, when one party is Egyptian an Egyptian deity is called on. It seems that certain disputes that needed an oath to satisfy one party were done by evoking a deity. For that reason, not too much should be read, with our current limited knowledge, into Mibtahiah's oath to a non-Jewish deity. It could have been legal procedure or syncretistic religion (Mibtahiah's second husband was Egyptian). *TADAE* B7.3 is the other example where Meshullam son of Nathan swears an oath by 'H[erem] the [god] in/by the place of prostration and by Anath YHW.'

- the Babylonian diaspora was xenophobic and exclusivistic because Ezra addresses the intermarriage issue in Ezra 9 in such a manner;¹⁷
- a diaspora community is always on the brink of cultural assimilation and complete integration, similar to the case of the northern Israelite diaspora that vanished in the Assyrian captivity;¹⁸
- the punishment of scattering is associated with religious syncretism and the loss of one's own religion, as some biblical passages threaten (cf. Jer 7:15; Ezek 22:15).¹⁹

¹⁷ Corrine L. Patton, "Pan-Deuteronomism and the Book of Ezekiel," in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 200-215, esp. 202. Such an assessment is highly influenced by Ezra and Nehemiah's attitude to outsiders, though as Lisbeth S. Fried remarks, it is not an attitude that is universal in the biblical corpus. See Lisbeth S. Fried, "From Xeno-Philia to -Phobia: Jewish Encounters with the Other," in *A Time of Change: Judah and its Neighbours in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods* (ed. Yigal Levin; LSTS 65; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 179-204, esp. 179. For a similar point about the disagreement between P and Ezra, see Mary Douglas, "The Stranger in the Bible," 35, no. 2 (1994): 283-298.

For a discussion about the intermarriage issue, see below.

¹⁸ See Diana Lipton, *Longing for Egypt and other unexpected Biblical Tales* (HBM 15; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 26.

¹⁹ Daniele Garrone embarks on an interesting speculation based on the presence of three geographical areas in the late text of Joshua 24, namely Mesopotamia, Egypt and Canaan. In all three areas the 'Israelites' worshipped other gods, though the point must be to choose which deity to worship independent of one's geographical position. The worship of foreign deities is associated with both the homeland and the diaspora; Daniele Garrone, "Diasporaerfahrungen im Alten Testament," 118-119.

- the diaspora continuously lived with an active expectation of return.²⁰

Scholars such as Norbert Lohfink,²¹ Martin Rose,²² Rainer Albertz,²³ and Christelle and Florence Jullien²⁴ provide helpful reconstructions of the *golah* community.²⁵ These reconstructions do not go far enough, in so far as they do not include comprehensive treatments of the theologies of the 'diaspora' prophets of Ezekiel and Jeremiah.²⁶ Rom-Shiloni rightfully views exilic theologizing as originating around the prophet Ezekiel,

²⁰ See for example, David Noel Friedman and Brian Kelly, "Who Redacted the Primary History?," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume* (ed. Chaim Cohen, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 39.

²¹ Norbert Lohfink, "Die Gattung der 'Historischen Kurzgeschichte'," 333-341; Norbert Lohfink, "Was there a Deuteronomistic Movement?," 61-63.

²² Martin Rose, "Deuteronomistic Ideology and Theology of the Old Testament," in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert De Pury, et al.; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 424-455, esp. 439-450.

²³ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 98-111. See also Rainer Albertz, "Wer waren die Deuteronomisten? Das historische Rätsel einer literarischen Hypothese," *EvT* 57, no. 4 (1997): 319-338.

²⁴ Christelle and Florence Jullien's study *'La Bible en exil'* is the first study exclusively dedicated to the influence of the Babylonian exiles on the Hebrew Bible. The reconstruction of Judean exilic existence follows primarily the findings from the Murašû archive in Nippur. Overall, the work lacks substantial engagement with contemporary scholarship. See, Christelle Jullien and Florence Jullien, *La Bible en exil* (Neuchâtel: Recherches et publications, 1995).

²⁵ In 1970 Yehezkel Kaufmann reconstructed the mindset of the Babylonian *golah* along the lines of a popular (though ahistorical) reading, where later historical developments in the diaspora were already present in the period of the Babylonian captivity. In Kaufmann's study some important observations, especially in regard to the perceived threat of assimilation, are already included in his work; see Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Babylonian Captivity and Deutero-Isaiah* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1970).

²⁶ For a discussion of Second-Isaiah's knowledge of Babylonian culture, religion and administration, which provide the background for his prophecies; see Peter Machinist, "Mesopotamian Imperialism," 244-258.

whom she identifies as the constructor of the exilic ideology that favours the 597 *golah*. One of the questions arising from such a reconstruction is the degree to which nationalism and restoration were part of the community's outlook. Ezekiel, for example, connects the exiles in Babylon to the first generations of the exodus, both in Egypt and in the wilderness (Ezek 20:33-38).²⁷

This study does not hold the view that the Babylonian *golah* saw themselves as exclusively chosen above any other group. The distinction that Pohlmann makes between the *golah* and the diaspora is an artificial division that is not supported by the textual evidence in Ezekiel and Jeremiah. There is no difference between a *golah* view and a diaspora view. The *golah* community, based on Jeremiah 24, viewed itself as divinely chosen but this was not dependent on the exclusion of other communities in Yehud or the diaspora. Yet, because of the redactional influence of the *golah* on the late books of Ezra-Nehemiah, with their repeated, explicit mentioning of the *golah* community, it was deemed best to highlight the continuity of the *golah* community in Babylon by continuously referring to the community as the *golah* (though in essence the term *diaspora* could also have been applied).

Overall there seems to be at least two *golah* groups preserved in the Hebrew Bible. One group returned early on in the restoration period (around 520 BCE) under the Zerubbabel and Joshua and was aided by the prophetic guidance of Haggai and Zechariah.²⁸ The other *golah* group is associated with Ezra in Ezra 7. The former group understands the population in Yehud to be the *entire* remnant of Judah/Yehud (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2). The books of Haggai and Zechariah never refer to the returnees or the population in Yehud after their return as the *golah*.²⁹

²⁷ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Ezekiel as the Voice of the Exiles," 24.

²⁸ Sheshbazzar had already returned in 538 BCE with the temple vessels and a group of uncertain size to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:5-11). For the problems associated with this first return and its relation to the 520 BCE return, see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 119-121.

²⁹ Zech 14:2 contains an oracle for the last days in which Jerusalem is attacked, defeated and plundered. Half of the population goes into exile (hlwg -*golah*) and the other half remains. No judgment on Jerusalem or the exiles is recorded

Zechariah 6:10 mentions three members who had come recently from Babylon and they are referred to as *hlwgh* (*hagolah*). However, the term *golah* had not yet become a technical term to describe the exiled community in Babylon. The special reference to Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah as having 'arrived from Babylon' indicates that they just had arrived and were not part of the initial return with Zerubbabel and Joshua.³⁰ However, Jedaiah is also found on a list of returnees in Ezra 2:36, as is Tobiah in Ezra 2:60.

That there was an early return is also recounted in the book of Ezra, though there the return finally culminates in the ministry of Ezra. In Ezra (and in Nehemiah) the community in the land is not referred to as the remnant but rather as *hlwgh ynb* (*bene hagolah*). One important difference is that in Haggai the whole remnant returns, while in Ezra the proclamation of Cyrus is presented as the temple restoration (and not the restoration of all the people) of those 'whose spirit God had stirred to go up to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of the LORD' (Ezra 1:5). No condemnation is levelled at those who remained but mention is made of their good deed of helping financially and giving silver, gold and other goods in great quantities (Ezra 1:6). A condemnation of those who remained cannot be part of the worldview of the book of Ezra, as this would reflect negatively on Ezra's own coming to Jerusalem a hundred years later. The text of Ezra stresses that the impetus to return was based on divine initiative, though surprisingly no divine initiative is reported for his own coming. 'Now after this Ezra went up from Babylon' (Ezra 7:1-2). The letter of King Artaxerxes to Ezra stresses that the return decree he received is one of a general return (Ezra 7:13). At this time in the narrative, the temple is built and functioning already.

The leadership of the 520 BCE returnees are not part of the *golah* in the sense that they differ significantly from the *golah* community in Babylon that was responsible for influencing the books of Ezekiel, Jeremiah and

in this context. See also Ben C. Ollenburger, "The Book of Zechariah," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol 7* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 733-840, esp. 836.

³⁰ Similarly, Ben Ollenburger, "The Book of Zechariah," 786.

especially Ezra-Nehemiah.³¹ Insights into the outlook of the 520 BCE returnees can primarily be gained from the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Traces of their mission can be found (though edited) in Ezra 1-6.³² It is noteworthy that all information about their return from Babylon is *not* narrated in the books of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who ministered to this community. Both prophetic books only narrate events in Yehud and are silent about the essential *golah* themes of Persian authorisation (both for the rebuilding of the temple and also the return from Babylon) and the return of true worship to Yehud (return of temple vessels, priests and Levites and ultimately the Torah). This group primarily re-builds the ruined temple. These books also witness to the temple hierarchy (priests and high-priest), detailed priestly knowledge of the Torah or parts of it (cf. Hag 2:11-13), to the divine blessing and favour bestowed on the community and to their subsequent work. It is remarkable that the community is divinely reassured by the divine presence or spirit located in their midst (Hag 2:5). However, the glory of YHWH will only return 'in a little while' (Hag 2:6-7.) This group does not refer to themselves as a *golah* in either the book of Haggai or in Zechariah. This group has a Yehud-centred view (or an all-inclusive-remnant view), that believes the *whole* remnant of Yehud is in the land at their time and not in Babylon (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2). Only in the *golah*-favouring passage of Ezra 1-6 is this group identified with the *golah*. In this way the post-520 Babylonian *golah* provides a theological interpretation of the historical events. The name is given to them by the group that edited these accounts – namely, the Babylonian *golah*. The reason for this may be that the Babylonian post-520 *golah* saw continuity between themselves and the early returnees.

One way in which the Babylonian *golah* sought, though without success, to link themselves to the temple and create a sense of continuity with

³¹ It is assumed that Haggai and Zechariah contain some reliable historical information from the early restoration period, leaving aside for the moment the question of the reliability of the dates in the book. For a discussion of it; see Diana Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple*, 80-150.

³² The presentation of the 520 return differs significantly between the early books of Haggai and Zechariah and the later *golah*-favouring book of Ezra 1-6.

the past was through the theme of the exiled temple vessels. Ackroyd points out the consistency of the Chronicler's account in regarding the exile to Babylon, in line with Jeremiah's prophecy of the good figs, as the end of true worship in Judah. The return of the vessels under Ezra-Nehemiah was the theme of fulfilled restoration and the return and re-inauguration of pure Yahwism, which re-established the continuity of worship for the first time since the time of David.³³ Ackroyd notes that the 'exile' of the temple vessels is recorded in 597 BCE and 587 BCE. These vessels are removed by YHWH and 'stored' for safe-keeping in Babylon. The fate of both the vessels and the Babylonian diaspora is similar. Both are removed for safekeeping in Babylon, the diaspora having also been removed for purification. Both are essentially needed for the restoration of true and pure Yahwistic temple worship. It is surely not coincidental that both 'groups' are preserved in Babylon. Ackroyd is right to note the prominence of the returned temple vessels in Ezra 1:7-11. However, the treatment of the temple vessels in the Hebrew Bible is uneven. The vessels are repeatedly removed from the temple. King Asa of Judah removes all treasures and sends them as tribute to Ben-Hadad in Syria (1 Kgs 15:18-19). King Jehoash of Israel loots the temple and brings all vessels to Samaria (2 Kgs 14:14). King Ahaz of Judah sends temple furniture as tribute to the king of Assyria (2 Kgs 16:17-18), as does King Hezekiah of Judah (2 Kgs 18:13-16). The essential problem is that the temple vessels are reported to have been completely destroyed by the Babylonians (2 Kgs 24:13) and so a return of the undamaged vessels is historically surprising. Some form of cult may well have continued after 587 BCE when several vessels may have been made to continue the cult in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the Babylonian *golah* uses the temple vessels in Ezra 1 to make the theological point of continuity.

The *golah* did not return in 520 BCE but remained in Babylon. They continued to view themselves as the chosen *golah*, whose mission it was to re-introduce to Yehud the true and authentic worship of YHWH.

³³ Peter R. Ackroyd, "The Temple Vessels - A Continuity Theme," in *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (ed. G.W. Anderson, et al.; VTSup 23; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 166-181.

This is at least how the *golah* in the time of the book of Ezra understood themselves. The group sees continuity between the returnees of 520 and themselves. The book of Ezra continuously refers to the community formed after 520 in Yehud as the *golah* (cf. Ezra 1:11; 2:1, 4:1). Certainly, the *golah* community in Yehud is viewed as an extension of the *golah* in Babylon.³⁴ The book of Ezra recognizes that the temple is build and completed, that priests and Levites serve YHWH there according to the book of Moses (hvm rps - *sephar Mosheh* - - Ezra 6:18) and even according to the Torah of Moses (hvm hrwt - *torah Mosheh* - Ezra 3:2). The temple vessels were returned from their exile (Ezra 1:7), Passover is celebrated (Ezra 6:19) and the celebration is described as pleasing to YHWH (Ezra 6:22). The whole restoration period culminates, according to the narrative in Ezra, with the dual events of Ezra's coming to teach the people and Artaxerxes' universal return decree that every Judahite in the Persian empire is permitted to return to Yehud with Ezra (Ezra 7:13).³⁵

Who then is the Babylonian *golah*? The Babylonian *golah* is made up of Judahites in Babylon. The *golah* is not limited to the descendants of the 597 deportation. The books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel have a diaspora-focus rather than a narrow, exclusive *golah* focus. Limiting the *golah* to the 597 deportation is also not supported in the late exilic narrative of Ezra-Nehemiah. Ezra 2:1 contains an inclusive list of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar carried captive. Nebuchadnezzar came twice to besiege Jerusalem in 597 and 587. The book of Jeremiah also includes among the exiles in Babylon members of the 587 BCE deportation, those who submitted to the Babylonians during the campaigns that led to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE (Jer 21:9; 40:1; 52:15; cf. 38:19). The *golah* includes some members of the intelligentsia of the 597 deportation.

³⁴ Peter Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland Relations," 152. The book of Nehemiah recognises a Judahite diaspora in Elam (Neh 1:2) and Nehemiah is an equal partner in the restoration. It may be going too far to argue, as Bedford (p. 152) does, that there is a 'Babylonian-Elamite diaspora' influencing Yehud. Nehemiah is the only individual who is recorded as acting for this community. However, in Ezra 2:2 Nehemiah is recorded as coming from Babylon (Ezra 2:1-2).

³⁵ In Ezra 1:2-4 only the temple restoration is decreed.

Jeremiah 39:6 narrates that the nobles of the 587 deportation were killed in Riblah by King Nebuchadnezzar, most likely for their role in the rebellion.

The Babylonian *golah* community in its early stage was made up primarily of members of the Judahite intelligentsia and priestly class. The overall outlook of the community was pro-Babylonian, especially as followers of the prophet Jeremiah with his 'surrender and live' theology must have felt vindicated by the events. Naturally, there must have been scribes among the *golah*, who could write down the *golah's* interpretation of history. Thus, someone in the *golah* must have been financially affluent enough to be a patron of this kind of work and support or sponsor the work of the scribes. It is difficult to establish whether the Shaphan family should be associated directly with the *golah* community in Babylon. Prominent members of the family were in Yehud in the inter-deportation period and Gedaliah even became the Babylonian appointee for Yehud. Other members of his family were most likely deported to ensure the loyalty of the whole family.³⁶ After Gedaliah's assassination, the prominence of the Shaphanides in the Hebrew Bible comes to an end.³⁷ Yet the general influence of the religious reform programme associated with the Shaphan family was felt in Babylon, where a renewal from below through the conversion of the people was envisioned (cf. Ezek 36:26).³⁸ Deuteronomistic ideas were also present in the early exilic period in the *golah*, the clearest example being the deuteronomistic outlook of the book of Jeremiah.³⁹

³⁶ From the Persian court it is known that family members of important imperial officials (even satraps) were held hostage to ensure the family's loyalty to the throne; see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 327.

³⁷ Cf. the only and negative portrayal of a Shaphanide is in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 8:11).

³⁸ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 135.

³⁹ Thomas C. Römer argues that because of the *golah*-favouring of many Deuteronomistic texts the origin of the deuteronomistic redaction of Jeremiah should also be located in the *golah*; see Thomas C. Römer, "Is There a Deuteronomistic Redaction in the Book of Jeremiah?," in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert De Pury,

Chapter 4: The *Golah*

The Babylonian *golah* influenced both the books and the theology of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.⁴⁰ This influence is thought to originate from the *golah* community in Babylon. Therefore, it is not surprising that they are also credited by some with the exilic redaction of the Deuteronomistic

et al.; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 399-421, esp. 402-403.

⁴⁰ See Peter R. Ackroyd, "Historians and Prophets," 52; Ernest Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles*, 123; Norbert Lohfink, "Die Gattung der 'Historischen Kurzgeschichte'," 333-335; Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 187-207; Christoph Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes*, 165-196; Christopher R. Seitz, "The Crisis of Interpretation," 80-97; Robert P. Carroll, *The Book of Jeremiah: A Commentary*, 79; Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 282-296. See also Hermann-Josef Stipp who argues that Jeremiah 37-43 originates in the Babylonian *golah*; see Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 278.

History (the Dtr² according to Cross),⁴¹ the patriarchal narratives⁴² and even the primary history (Genesis to 2 Kings).⁴³ This study agrees that the Babylonian *golah* influenced some biblical books but this does not necessarily mean that a redaction of these books could only have

⁴¹ Rainer Albertz reminds us that because of the deuteronomistic redaction of Jeremiah, the geographical origin of both works is identical; see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 322, also Norbert Lohfink, "Was there a Deuteronomistic Movement?," 61. For a good treatment of the exilic and post-exilic passages in the DtrH, see Eckart Otto, "Perspektiven der neueren Deuteronomismusforschung," ZAW 119, no. 3 (2007): 319-340. Frank Cross pointed out that this exilic redaction surprisingly shows no theological reflection on the captivity of Judah and the fall of Jerusalem (p. 93) and the exilic redactor introduced a sub-theme of defeat and captivity (p. 91), pointing even to annihilation and destruction in the exile (cf. Deut 28:36-68); see Frank Moore Cross, "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville; SBTs 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 79-94, esp. 83.

Further proponents of an exilic edition of the Deuteronomistic History, are Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 66-67 (with hesitation), Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 283, Ernest Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles*, 118-123; Thomas C. Römer and Albert De Pury, "Deuteronomistic Historiography," 88; Norbert Lohfink, "Was there a Deuteronomistic Movement?," 61-63; Walter Dietrich, "Niedergang und Neuanfang: Die Haltung der Schlussredaktion des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerkes zu den wichtigsten Fragen ihrer Zeit," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 45-70, esp. 50, 62; Timo Veijola, "The Deuteronomistic Roots of Judaism," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume* (ed. Chaim Cohen, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 459-478, esp. 476-477; Wolfgang Zwickel, "Jerusalem und Samaria zur Zeit Nehemias. Ein Vergleich," BZ 52, no. 2 (2008): 201-222, esp. 221.

⁴² Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 246-271.

⁴³ David Freedman concludes that the Primary History was written by a single individual around 560 BCE in Babylon under the influence of Ezekiel; see David Noel Freedman and Brian Kelly, "Who Redacted the Primary History?," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume* (ed. Chaim Cohen, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 39-47, esp. 39.

happened in Babylon. It is equally possible that the *golah* influence found its way into the texts through *golah* returnees in Yehud.

Immediately upon arrival in Babylon, the *golah* faced the question of its own self-identity. Is this group just one more exiled Israelite/Judahite community? The first question that needed to be addressed was whether the exiled community had lost YHWH's favour, an argument clearly invoked by those who remained in the land (cf. Ezek 33:24). The argument was then turned on its head by the *golah*-community, whose theological conviction was that YHWH's favour exclusively lay with them, so that the land was as good as empty, resting and waiting for them to re-populate it.

The Hebrew Bible witnesses to the inevitable fact that not all exilic experience is equal. It does matter who went and when they went. From a Judean perspective it is not surprising that the Israelite deportees (733 to 722 BCE) do not play a prominent role. Surprising, though, is the neglect of the 701 deportation of Judahites to Assyria; all biblical accounts describing Babylonian deportations from Jerusalem place the numerical emphasis on the 597 deportation. 2 Kings 24 gives a figure of 10,000 captives for the 597 deportation and no figures for the 587 deportation. Jeremiah 52:28-30 reports 3,023 deportees for the first deportation, 823 for the second and 745 for the third.⁴⁴ The 597 *golah* is thus nearly double the size of the two subsequent deportations. This explains quite well why the 587 BCE deportation does not feature prominently in the book of Jeremiah. An interesting insight into the social make-up of the 597 *golah* can be gleaned from its treatment of the number of deportees in Jeremiah. While 2 Kings 24 lists 7,000 soldiers who were deported, the figures in Jeremiah seem to suggest a deliberate exclusion of these soldiers and, thus, a shift of emphasis to include only those who remained in Babylon. The majority of the soldiers had

⁴⁴ See Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 81-90 for the discussion about the different deportation figures.

probably settled in a different location from the Babylonian *golah* community.⁴⁵

Interestingly, the biblical witnesses are silent about the deportation of the priestly class.⁴⁶ For the 597 deportation, the following people are listed in 2 Kgs 24:12-16 and Jer 24:1: the royal court, the aristocracy, soldiers, craftsmen and the smiths; but no explicit mention is made of the priestly class. However, in relation to the Assyrian deportation of Samaria, the compiler of 2 Kings mentions the return of one priest to teach the new settlers how to fear YHWH (2 Kgs 17:28). The only priests mentioned in relation to any deportation are: Seraiah, the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest and the three keepers of the threshold (2 Kgs 25:18, 20) who were subsequently executed by Babylonian forces in 587 BCE. For some reason, the deportation of priests or Levites is not recorded. Neither are they explicitly mentioned in the 597 deportation but they may be included in 'the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon together with the rest of the multitude' (2 Kgs 25:11 cf. Jer 39:9) in the year 587 BCE. There are two sources that indicate priests were among the exiles. The most important witness is Ezekiel's presence in the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile by the Chebar canal in Babylon (Ezek 1:1-3). Through Ezekiel's presence a priestly witness can be established for the Baby-

⁴⁵ Deported military personnel were most likely stationed in ethnically mixed garrisons under Babylonian supervision. For the Persian practice; see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 342.

⁴⁶ Rainer Albertz suggests that the Babylonian destruction of the temple is an unusual Babylonian practice, and the four-week gap between the conquest of Jerusalem and temple destruction is best explained as a punishment of the religious establishment for their role in the anti-Babylonian rebellion. 2 Kgs 25:4-8 (cf. also Jer 39:6-8) places the temple destruction after the interrogation of the leading citizen of Jerusalem by the Babylonian administration in Riblah. This was followed by the arrest and execution of the high priest (2 Kgs 25:18-21). See also Rainer Albertz, "Die Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels 587 v. Chr.: Historische Einordnung und religionspolitische Bedeutung," in *Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels* (ed. Johannes Hahn; WUNT 147; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 23-39, esp. 35.

Ionian *golah*. The second source of information about priestly deportees and their lead in the return and restoration is found in the numerous references in Ezra and Nehemiah and also in Jer 29:1.

2 Kings 24 also reports the destruction of the golden temple vessels, thus disabling proper temple service according to the manner that 'the Lord had foretold' (2 Kgs 24:13). 2 Kings assesses the situation following the exile of Jehoiachin and of the 597 *golah* in light of the continuation of the evil ways of the kings. It contains the following bleak assessment of the reign of Zedekiah prior to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple: 'for because of the anger of the LORD it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence' (2 Kgs 24:20). Thus, the rejection of the temple and of Jerusalem is underlined and the focus is shifted towards the 597 *golah* community.

4.3. The *Golah* and the Theological Concept of Exile

The traditional dating of the book of Deuteronomy to the pre-exilic period of Josiah carries with it the assumption that the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations were interpreted in light of a deuteronomic theology of sin that leads to exile. The fundamental theological question is whether or not restoration is an intrinsic element of such an exilic theology.⁴⁷ In relation to Genesis, the former concept finds its expression in the expulsion of all guilty parties from Eden, without any restorative possibility.⁴⁸ Another example of the theological stance in which sin brings about exile can be found in the narrative of the deluge. Here the theological standpoint has slightly different nuances; sin leads to destruction, not exile *per se* and the righteous will be saved if the divine

⁴⁷ See for example, Yair Hoffman, "The Deuteronomist and the Exile," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. D. P. Wright, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 659-75.

⁴⁸ Bernard Batto argues that the 'covenant of peace' motif in Ezek 34:25; 37:26 and Isa 54:10 draws on paradise myth and envisions restoration in that manner; see Bernard F. Batto, "The Covenant of Peace: A Neglected Ancient Near Eastern Motif," *CBQ* 49, no. 2 (1987): 187-211, esp. 189.

instructions are followed (in this case the building of the ark). These observations call for a long overdue assessment of the biblical concepts of exile.⁴⁹

Traditionally, the idea of exile was intrinsically linked with that of a future restoration.⁵⁰ The Book of Lamentations, for example, contains numerous pessimistic statements about hopelessness under the exilic curse. Exile is a time when the people are under YHWH's wrath, are without forgiveness (Lam 3:42) and suffer destruction and annihilation (Lam 3:43-54). Restoration is not taken for granted: 'Why do you forget us forever, why do you forsake us for so many days?' (Lam 5:20).⁵¹ Rom-Shiloni has extracted from Deuteronomy four differing conceptualisations of the result of disobedience (or a 'theology of exile'): (1) total calamity within the land, (2) deportation and dispersion, (3) continuous existence in exile and also (4) restoration.⁵² She traces each of the four concepts in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In the deuteronomic sense at least, exile not only leads to the loss of land but also to utter destruction and

⁴⁹ For an excellent treatment and a full discussion of this important question, see Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile," 101-123.

⁵⁰ Geo Widengren links gathering of the dispersion to the royal ideology in Mesopotamia up to the time of the last Babylonian kingdom; see Geo Widengren, "Yahweh's Gathering of the Dispersed," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays On Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (ed. W. Bozd Barrick and John R. Spencer; JSOTSup 31; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 227-245, esp. 235.

⁵¹ Marjo C. A. Korpel views Second Isaiah's concept of exile in direct opposition to the hopeless non-restorative laments in Lamentation; see Marjo C. A. Korpel, "Second Isaiah's Coping with the Religious Crisis: Reading Isaiah 40 and 55," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 90-113, esp. 91-92.

⁵² For an assessment of Deuteronomy's theology of exile; see Kenneth Jon Turner, "The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy's Theology of Exile" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005). For an assessment of Deuteronomy 28 and the ancient near Eastern concept of exile; see Martien Halvorson-Taylor, "The Development of Exile as Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible", 29-45.

the death of the people. The curses for covenantal disobedience in Deuteronomy 28 list eight times the utter destruction of the people (Deut 28:20, 22, 24, 26, 45, 48, 51, 61; cf. also Deut 4:26; 6:15; 8:19; 11:17; 30:18). According to the passages cited above, the consequence of disobedience is 'annihilation, not exile.'⁵³ The same idea is preserved in 2 Kgs 24:2-3, where destruction is expected because of Manasseh's sin.

Another consequence of covenantal disobedience is deportation from the land and dispersion, a scattering away from YHWH (see Deut 4:27-28; 28:36-37, 63-64; 29:28; 30:1-10). In the majority of cases the idea of restoration is not present in these verses: the exilic scattering and the punishment associated with it are continuous. Only twice does the concept of restoration appear in Deuteronomy. First, in Deut 4:29-31, it is initiated by the exiles through their return (bv - *shub*) to YHWH. Yet no ingathering or return is promised or hinted at.⁵⁴ Secondly, in Deut 30:1-10 a complete restoration with ingathering, re-settlement, transformation of hearts and blessings, both spiritual and agricultural, is envisioned.⁵⁵

Rom-Shiloni suggests that the understanding of exile as a punishment comprising of complete and utter destruction could be associated with the reflection of the Neo-Assyrian exiles from the northern Kingdom. The lack of a reflection in the biblical texts about a return of Israelite captives suggests that the presence of the return motif in Deuteronomy could only be part of an exilic or post-exilic reflection based on the Babylonian exile.⁵⁶ Ezekiel 11:15 records that the Jerusalemites held to a theology in which exile is punishment for sin, that subsequently they must be the chosen remnant, the seed of Abraham (Ezek 33:24) and that the land is theirs because the previous owners would not return.

⁵³ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomistic Concepts of Exile," 106.

⁵⁴ Norbert Lohfink points out that in the priestly writings *return* is solemnly by divine favour, and not, as in the prophetic and deuteronomistic literature, a consequence of human penitence; see Norbert Lohfink, "Was there a Deuteronomistic Movement?," 62.

⁵⁵ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomistic Concepts of Exile," 107.

⁵⁶ Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomistic Concepts of Exile," 109.

This sense of utter rejection must also have been in the minds of those who went into exile. Both the exilic prophetic books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah acknowledge the concept of the total annihilation of the exiled community (cf. Jer 9:11-15; 22:24-30; 27:9-15; Ezek 11:1-10). As a result, the chosenness of the *golah* community in Babylon in Jeremiah 24 over the remaining population in Yehud required a theological re-orientation (cf. Ezek 11:16). The question remains as to whether the shift in theological understanding of the severity of the exilic punishment was a gradual development, dealing with a theological construct in light of the reality of the actual exile. In my view, the shift should rather be seen in connection with the exilic endorsement of the *golah*, which also prompted the question of the validity of a theologically finite exile in light of the explicit and divinely endorsed chosenness of an exiled community. This would also explain why such a view is absent from the early post-exilic books of Haggai and Zechariah, in which claims of a special status of the Babylonian *golah* are unknown. This theological shift is regularly underestimated; in the biblical tradition, exile without restoration is the result of punishment for sin.

It might be assumed that the fundamental theological premise that exile and scattering are the result of punishment for sin (compare, Lev 26,33; also among many others Ezekiel 5 and Jer 46:28; 49:36) and result in death and annihilation left the strongest impression on the minds of the exiled population in the Babylonian *golah*. This is especially so when reminded by their own experience of the fate and disappearance of the exiled population of the northern Kingdom and also the Judahite deportation of 701 BCE. In the Deuteronomistic History the exile is solemnly and explicitly blamed on the sins of Manasseh, based on the dual reason of idol-worship (2 Kgs 21:11) and bloodshed/violence (2 Kgs 2:16).⁵⁷ The

⁵⁷ See also Baruch Halpern, "Why Manasseh is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition," 48, no. 4 (1998): 473-514. John F. Kutsko links the priestly tradition's condemnation of bloodshed, which in Ezekiel is then regularly paired with idolatry, with the causes of the exile. See John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (BJSUCSD 7; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 70-74. For a discussion about the link between exile and the flood narrative; see Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel," in *The*

prophet Ezekiel is the most outspoken critic of idolatry and he repeatedly links the people's exile with their idolatry.⁵⁸ The idolatry of the nation provoked YHWH's righteous anger and resulted in the rejection of Jerusalem and the people. Nevertheless, important theological considerations, influenced by their own exilic existence, were added to this picture of overall judgment. One way of compensating for the exilic situation, on the individual level, is the promise that the righteous will live and the sinner will perish (Ezekiel 18). This important theological development stresses the individual's responsibility for the judgment he or she receives and contains at the same time the opportunity for escaping the sphere of sin (and thus divine judgment). YHWH pronounces a future restoration for those scattered (the *golah* and the diaspora) who will live righteous lives before him. This shift in understanding of YHWH was triggered by the divine prophetic revelations in the book of Ezekiel. There, YHWH is concerned for his own name, which is profaned among the nations by the scattering of his people (Ezek 36:16-21). YHWH promises that he will act (Ezek 36:22) and, at the same time, that he will cleanse his people and install a new heart and spirit in them (Ezek 36:26). He will turn the wasteland into the garden of Eden (Ezek 36:35) and will resurrect their dead bones and fill them with a life-giving spirit (Ezek 37:1-14). He will gather the scattered Judahite and Northern exiles and join them to one nation (Ezek 37:15-28) and re-install a Davidic king over them.

The question of guilt is central to the theologizing emphasis of the early Babylonian *golah* community.⁵⁹ Jeremiah 40:2-3 reflects the overall

Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday (ed. Carol L. Meyers and Michael O'Connor; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 399-414, esp. 409-412.

⁵⁸ John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 26.

⁵⁹ Ehud Ben Zvi's observation about the nature of the post-restoration community is by historical precedent also true of the *golah* community, 'all Israel lives in the post-judgment period. The importance of this connotation for the self-images of the Yehudite community or communities cannot be overly stressed because of the overwhelming number of references in post-monarchic biblical texts to monarchic, pre-exilic Israel as worthy of divine punishment. Thus, to claim that 'El = I' ['exilic Israel equals Israel'] within the

ANE understanding of the catastrophe that befell Judah. Nebuzaradan, the Babylonian officer who oversaw the siege of Jerusalem, acknowledges the essential connection between sin, the destruction of Judah and YHWH's choosing Babylon as an instrument of his wrath. The sin and disobedience of the people resulted in divine rejection and the Babylonians are YHWH's agent of punishment (Jer 40:2-3). The vision that Ezekiel sees goes one step further in linking idolatry to the complete and utter destruction of the people (Ezek 8:9-15; 9:4). Ezekiel is prompted in Ezek 9:8 to cry out and ask YHWH: 'Will you destroy all the remnant of Israel in the outpouring of your wrath on Jerusalem?' The divine reply is:

The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great. The land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice. For they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see.' As for me, my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will bring their deeds upon their heads. (Ezek 9:9-10)

The same tone is generally applied to the scattering into all the lands (Deut 32:26). Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the early Babylonian 597/587 *golah* community must have lived under a cloud of doom, as they lived under divine wrath, exiled from their land and awaiting death.

In such a context we might imagine the emergence of a theology that hopes for restoration not based on merit but based on YHWH's own mercy and concern for his own name (see P's theology of grace).⁶⁰ The

matrix of these discourses is to claim that Israel has already paid its penalty (cf. Isa. 40.2), and therefore is ready for a new beginning; conversely, to deny the exilic (or post-exilic) character of Israel would be tantamount to associating oneself with those who are still unpunished.' See Ehud Ben Zvi, "Inclusion in and Exclusion," 134-135; also Jurie Le Roux, "Suffering and Hope during the Exile," in *Exile and Suffering* (ed. Bob Becking and Dirk Human; OtSt 50; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 19-32, esp. 25-26, who links this theologizing explicitly with Zadokites in the deuteronomistic redaction of Deuteronomy, which traces the origin of 'Israel' not to the exodus or the patriarchs but to Mt. Horeb. See also Meira Polliack, "Deutero-Isaiah's Typological Use," 78.

⁶⁰ Christoph Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes*, 133, points out that in Jer 31:34b (a supplement to the early exilic promise), the promise of

prophet Ezekiel recalls the sin that led to the exile and the lack of reformation of their ways and their hearts:

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. (Ezek 36:22)

A similar idea is expressed in Jer 3:12, where YHWH calls on the Northern Kingdom to return to him, for he is merciful.⁶¹ The only precondition is the acknowledgement of guilt (Jer 3:13). Divine mercy is expressed in YHWH's willingness to take back his divorced partner, Judah, in contradiction to the requirements of Deut 24:1-4 (cf. Jer 3:1).⁶² Baruch J. Schwartz makes a similar point about Ezekiel in relation to when the prophet announces the exile's restoration, while at the same time insisting that they remain utterly unworthy of it.⁶³ This is a development that finds its key expression in Ezekiel, where YHWH promises restoration for the exiled, not because they reformed their ways but for the

forgiveness is included, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'

⁶¹ Klaus Baltzer similarly points to the motif of slave redemption in Deutero-Isaiah, where the master exceeds his obligations when he buys back a slave; see Klaus Baltzer, "Liberation from Debt Slavery After the Exile in Second Isaiah and Nehemiah," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. Patrick D. Jr. Miller, et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 477-484, esp. 479.

⁶² For a discussion on this point and YHWH being more liberal than the theology of Deuteronomy, see Mayer I. Gruber, "Jeremiah 3:1-4:2 between Deuteronomy 24 and Matthew 5: Jeremiah's Exercise in Ethical Criticism," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Chaim Cohen, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 233-249, esp. 234-235.

⁶³ Baruch J. Schwartz, "The Ultimate Aim of Israel's Restoration in Ezekiel," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Chaim Cohen, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 305-319, esp. 305.

simple reason that YHWH will remember his covenant and act for his own name's sake (Ezek 36:16-21).

Expressions of this theological shift can also be seen in Genesis. In Eden, the consequence of eating from the tree was 'surely' death (Gen 2:17), though Adam and Eve were subsequently *only* expelled – even in a pre- (or non-) covenant situation YHWH acts graciously. Also, in light of the continuous presentation of the patriarchs' failure to live up to the divine standard, all these narratives contain the reassuring message for those whose corrupt action is found out (either a deceitful Abraham or a nation plagued by their guilt of being exiled by their God to a foreign land), the covenant promise of YHWH stands even when God's people act in continued ignorance and do not reform their ways. YHWH comes to the rescue of his people, not because of their action but because he remembers the promises he made.

4.4. The *Golah* and the Nature of the Restoration

One of the assumptions guiding the interpretation of exilic and post-exilic material is that in the exilic and early post-exilic period, a strong national ideology of return and restoration was concentrated around the royal remnant in Babylon.⁶⁴ This restoration encompassed the complete restoration of Judahite institutions (royal and temple) and Judahite national independence, or, alternatively, the restoration of the royal house of David as a hereditary dynasty of governors of Judah.⁶⁵ This is the way the post-exilic situation is narrated in Zechariah and Haggai.⁶⁶ McConville notes that the books of Kings do not envision a

⁶⁴ Robert P. Carroll suggests that the 'biblical' view of the term *exile* is that it is 'a temporary departure from one's own country in order to spend some time elsewhere before returning to the homeland.' See Robert P. Carroll, "Razed Temple and Shattered Vessels," 98.

⁶⁵ See Jer 29:20-23 and the recorded prophecies of Ahab and Zedekiah in Babylon in 594 BCE. For the historical reconstruction see Rainer Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," esp. 4-5.

⁶⁶ See Rainer Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," 3-10. The presentation of return and restoration in the early post-exilic Yehud books of Haggai and

return to the land.⁶⁷ The general view is that in 538 BCE the exiles received permission to return home and from then on all biblical interest centres on the restoration community in Yehud.⁶⁸ Such a view assumes that the exile ended after 70 years (cf. Jer 25:12; 29:10; Lev 26:33-43) and that it is natural for citizens to live only in their own homeland. Following from this is the idea that the exiles should return from exile and return to their original homeland.⁶⁹

The hope for a complete royal restoration and an active participation in it must have been a short lived programme in the *golah*. It is probable that the adoption of such an ideology would be most prominent among the royal remnant in Babylon and the exiled Judahite aristocracy (and perhaps Judahite officials),⁷⁰ since these groups would benefit from the

Zechariah differ strongly from the presentation of the *golah*-orientated theological books. Hag 2:2 identifies the remnant with the people in the land; for a further discussion, see Sara Japhet, "The Concept of the 'Remnant'," 432-499.

⁶⁷ For the full discussion see J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 163. Similarly Robert P. Carroll, "Razed Temple and Shattered Vessels," 99.

⁶⁸ The prominence of the return theme in the discourses relating to the exile or to the exiles is not surprising in light of the amount of alienation of living in a foreign land. However, the theological motivation of the *golah* for returning is linked to the beginning of the new *Heilszeit*; see Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Studien zum Jeremiabuch*, 190.

⁶⁹ Only Jer 29:10 links the 70 years to return from exile. For the interpretation of seventy as a symbolic figure; see Hans Barstad, *Myth of the Empty Land*, 40; Peter R. Ackroyd, "Two Old Testament Historical Problems of the Early Persian Period," *JNES* 17, no. 1 (1958): 13-27, esp. 23-27; R. Borger, "An Additional Remark on P. R. Ackroyd, *JNES*, XVII, 23-27," *JNES* 18, no. 1 (1959): 74; A. S. Kapelrud, "The Number Seven in Ugaritic Texts," *VT* 18, no. 4 (1968): 494-499; F. C. Fensham, "The Numeral Seventy in the Old Testament and the Family of Jerubbaal, Ahab, Panammuwa and Athirat," *PEQ* 109 (1977): 113-115.

⁷⁰ I am not sure about the role of these groups in the formation of the *golah* theology, in particular the group of officials (μϋρχ - *hasarim*) which are heroes on the one hand (Jer 26:10-16) and villains on the other (Jer 38:1-6). See also the case of Elnathan, a hero of the prophetic word in Jer 36:25 who is involved in the murder of a prophet in Jer 26:22-23. For a discussion of this group, see

restoration of the 'old order.' Yet, in the course of the exile the intelligentsia would conclude that a restoration of the old order was highly unlikely. The Babylonian (and later the Persian) empire seemed from golah's Mesopotamian-centred perspective to be able to withstand all serious challenges to their dominance. Only those who were able to align themselves with the imperial administration would maintain a sphere of influence and prosperity. High imperial positions in the administration were rare and limited for non-Babylonians and much sought after.⁷¹ They also required complete loyalty to the Babylonian crown. Therefore, it seems fair to conclude that the decline of the Judahite aristocracy is related to the limited number of administrative positions available to them in Babylon.⁷²

Not everyone in the priestly circles in Babylon favoured the return of the cult under the authority of the royal house; the years of exile and the example of the Babylonian temples, which maintained some autonomy from the crown, had taught them the value of independence. Yet these temples lost their autonomy in the Persian period and were taxed like everyone else who had land.⁷³ The Egyptian temple in the oasis El Khārga, which was rebuilt by the Persian king Darius, highlights the influence that the imperial administration had on the religious outlook of the temple. Darius is depicted as the pharaoh who, among others, is embraced by the goddess Isis, who refers to him as her much-beloved

also Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Jeremia im Parteienstreit*, 7-10, 72, where he suggests that the officials had to relate their own political legitimacy as leaders to the question of the collapse of the state. Also Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 325-326; Norbert Lohfink, "Die Gattung der 'Historischen Kurzgeschichte'," 335-342.

⁷¹ For a full discussion, see Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 350-352.

⁷² It is presumed that in the course of the exile the social influence of these groups, based on their former social position, declined in favour of the priestly groupings who could maintain and even enhance their social standing in the community due to the mobility of the divine presence and a general need for their religious ministry in the lives of individuals.

⁷³ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 73-74.

son.⁷⁴ Thus, it is not surprising that a certain antagonism developed in relation to any kind of royal influences on the cult. This might also have driven the development of a national religious theology that envisioned the freedom of the people from foreign (mainly Babylonian and Persian) religious influences. Albertz notes that Ezekiel 40-48 and also P point to the development of the cult solemnly administered by the priest themselves. These developments separate the cult from royal administration and such a programme would have been difficult to impose under a restored Davidic monarchy.⁷⁵ This might explain the understanding of the restoration of the temple as an active project based on a distinct form of Judean religion. The restoration of an independent nation is then the subsequent step. However, the only Judahite restoration that materialises in their time was the restoration of the temple.

The notion of long-held feelings of national restoration is normally associated with Jehoiachin or Zerubbabel. The Deuteronomistic History mentions only one incident from the exilic period: the release of Jehoiachin from captivity and the favourable treatment he received at the royal palace. In the province of Yehud, the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah seemingly endorse the returned Davidic governor Zerubbabel⁷⁶ and prophesy about him using 'royal' terminology (Hag 2:23, Zech 4:14).⁷⁷ His sudden disappearance without a trace has led to the speculation that a Davidic restoration, centred on his person, arose in Yehud

⁷⁴ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 475-476.

⁷⁵ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 130.

⁷⁶ Paolo Sacchi suggests that the title Josephus gives for Zerubbabel should be translated 'governor of the Jewish captives' or 'governor of the Jews in exile' (*Ant* 11.32). See Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period* (JSOTSup 285; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 61.

⁷⁷ For a good re-assessment of the evidence, see Wolter H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (JSOTSup 304; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); and his article Wolter H. Rose, "Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; STAR 5; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 168-185. See also the discussion in Jill Middlemas, *The Templeless Age*, 122-125.

and was quashed by the Persians.⁷⁸ Zerubbabel is the son of Shealtiel, who is the son of Jehoiachin – the last king of Judah. Zerubbabel is usually referred to as the son of Shealtiel (Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2; Neh 12:1; Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 23) but the fact that his grandfather was King Jehoiachin is continuously downplayed in the biblical witness. His royal origin and his Davidic ancestry are never explicitly highlighted.⁷⁹ Both Haggai and Zechariah live in Yehud and they support and are vocal about national restoration and this is based on their national, anti-occupation ideology. However, it is not long before the governor Zerubbabel disappears from history. Most likely he was recalled to the Persian court because his presence sparked nationalistic restoration hopes in Yehud.⁸⁰ Subsequently, the prophet Zechariah adjusts his prophecy to focus only on the high-priest Joshua. Rose assessed the evidence for the supposed Davidic restoration and concludes, 'we simply do not know for what reason we suddenly stop hearing about Zerubbabel but that the evidence that is there speaks against a removal hypothesis.'⁸¹ Yet, in none of the texts is there any explicit mention of a national restoration. Jehoiachin is not re-installed as leader of his people; he remains in exile and his fate appears ambiguous in the text.⁸² Zerubbabel is mentioned primarily in relation to the temple rebuilding (Ezra 3:2, 8; 4:2-3; Hag 1:12,

⁷⁸ Leroy Waterman, "The Camouflaged Purge of the Three Messianic Conspirators," *JNES* 13, no. 2 (1954): 73-78, 73. Paolo Sacchi, following André Lemaire, reconstructs the early restoration governors of Yehud as follows, 'after Zerubbabel most probably came the governorship of his brother Hananah, and then Elnathan, the husband of Hananah's sister, Shelomit ... the end of the Davidic dynasty was rather gradual.' See Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*, 14.

⁷⁹ Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography: How and Why?," in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert De Pury, et al.; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 144-173, esp. 153.

⁸⁰ Bryan E. Beyer, "Zerubbabel." *ABD* 6:1084-1086. For a reconstruction of these events, see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 128-129.

⁸¹ Wolter H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*, 35-36.

⁸² See David Janzen, "An Ambiguous Ending: Dynastic Punishment in Kings and the Fate of the Davidides in 2 Kings 25.27-30," *JSOT* 33, no. 1 (2008): 39-58.

14; Zech 4:9). He was the governor of Yehud who is primarily remembered in the Hebrew Bible for carrying out the imperially decreed temple restoration.⁸³

The central concept guiding the contemporary interpretation of the restoration period is the motif of national restoration and the question of when this restoration was to be achieved. The restoration of Jehoiachin at the end of the Deuteronomistic History (2 Kgs 25:27-30) is taken to indicate the presence of hope for a Davidic restoration.⁸⁴ On the other hand, the presence of a national restoration motif is evident in the Babylonian *golah*.⁸⁵ King Jehoiachin is released from prison after thirty-seven years in exile in 2 Kings' version of events. He is given a place of honour at the king's table in Babylon for as long as he lived but this does not claim to be the restoration. King Jehoiachin is still in Babylon, he is released from prison but he is not returned nor re-installed as the monarch of Judah.⁸⁶

If royal restoration were foremost in the mind of the exiles, then any kind of information about the sons or the family of Jehoiachin would have been expected to have been recorded, especially in light of the prophecy that the exile would last three generations/70 years but this

⁸³ The other one being Sheshbazzar, see Ezra 5:16.

⁸⁴ Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 79-83; T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC 13; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1985), 368-369; Iain W. Provan, "The Messiah in the Book of Kings," in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite, et al.; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 67-85, esp. 71-76.

⁸⁵ Rainer Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," 5. Also Walter Dietrich, "History and Law: Deuteronomistic Historiography and Deuteronomistic Law Exemplified in the Passage from the Period of the Judges to the Monarchical Period " in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. Albert De Pury, et al.; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 315-342, esp. 67.

⁸⁶ Rainer Albertz argues convincingly that Jehoiachin was imprisoned in Babylon, most likely as the result of the murder of Gedaliah in 582 BCE. The murder had been committed by a distant relative of the king, therefore, he was liable for the events; see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 104.

is the case in neither 2 Kings nor the much later writings of Chronicles.⁸⁷ It seems that a royal restoration ideology did not survive the lengthy stay in exile, as these individuals must have felt a strong sense of defeat and were subsequently won over by the victorious surrender-and-live party. A similar experience is found among contemporary Chilean exiles: 'exiles are forced to leave their country, which they do with a profound feeling of defeat for the personal and political project they had built and placed their hopes on.'⁸⁸ The Weidner tablets record that by 592 BCE (five years after his deportation) Jehoiachin already had five sons. It seems fair to conclude that those who chose to ignore Jehoiachin's heirs in 2 Kings present him as the last of his kind.⁸⁹ The last royal heir of the Davidic line active before the exile is Ishmael (Jer 41:4), whose barbaric actions towards the general population and particularly, towards religious pilgrims reflect the state of the monarchy in its final days.⁹⁰

It is argued that the exiles in Babylon still viewed Jehoiachin as the king of Judah. This is based on the references in the book of Ezekiel, where the dating is set according to the regnal year of King Jehoiachin (Ezek

⁸⁷ Similar, Donald F. Murray, "Of All the Years the Hopes: Or Fears? Jehoiachin in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27-30)," *JBL* 120, no. 2 (2001): 245-265, esp. 263.

⁸⁸ Marcela Cornejo, "Political Exile," 335.

⁸⁹ For a similar assessment, see Christopher Begg, "The Significance of Jehoiachin's Release: a New Proposal," 53, who points out that the release is not attributed to YHWH and that there is no return to Jerusalem. Bob Becking adds that his release solemnly a matter of personal liberation without any consequences for the rest of the people; see Bob Becking, "Jehoiachin's Amnesty, Salvation for Israel? Notes on 2 Kings 25,27-30," in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress, Leuven 1989* (ed. Christian Brekelmans and Johan Lust; BETL 94; Leuven: Leuven University Press / Uitgeverij Peeters, 1990), 283-293, esp. 292.

⁹⁰ Alternatively, as Mark Roncace points out, there is similarity between Israel's first king, Saul, and its last king, Zedekiah. Both share a number of similarities; both did not seek kingship but both clung to it 'at all costs' (p. 148), both ruled but both were not considered the true king, and both did not pass the kingdom on to their sons. See Mark Roncace, *Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem* (LHBOTS 324; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 146-159.

1:2; 33:21; 40:1).⁹¹ Yet only the opening reference in Ezek 1:2 refers to King Jehoiachin. The two references in Ezek 33:21 and Ezek 40:1 refer to the 'twelfth/twenty-fifth year of *our* exile.' Notable in these references is the fact that the year of the inauguration of King Jehoiachin is *identical* to the year of the exile of the 597 *golah*.⁹² The last two references thus seem to indicate a change from national restoration towards a diaspora existence within the Ezekielian narration of the exile; a theology that sees the future of YHWH's restoration intrinsically bound up with the religious diaspora community in Babylon and not as the immediate restoration of the Judahite monarchy. The dirge in Ezekiel 19 goes one step further in lamenting the capture, deportation and ultimate end of the royal house of Judah, implying that 'the dynasty would perish.'⁹³

However, the significance of Jehoiachin's exile cannot be wholly established on the basis of these references. In the book of Jeremiah two incidents are recorded from the very early exilic period, a time when Zedekiah was still king in Jerusalem, and these indicate the presence of a national restoration ideology or as Albertz calls it, 'religious nationalism.'⁹⁴ The first references are the speeches of the prophet Hananiah,

⁹¹ Cf. Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 102; Wolter H. Rose, "Deuteronomistic Ideology and Theology," esp. 440.

⁹² For a discussion on the dating in Ezekiel and the Fall of Jerusalem, see Abraham Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem: An Historical-Chronological Study," *IEJ* 18, no. 3 (1968): 137-155, esp. 148-149.

⁹³ 'Die Löwin, und d.h. das Jerusalemer Königtum, so die fatalistisch-resignative Schlußfolgerung, ist am Ende' ['The lioness, i.e. the Jerusalemite kingdom, so the fatalistic-resignative conclusion, is finished.']. See Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Hezekiel 1-19*, 286. See also Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1-19* (WBC 28; Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 291.

⁹⁴ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 110. Albertz identifies the Babylonian *golah* as the origin of DtrH; see Rainer Albertz, "Wer waren die Deuteronomisten?," 335. For him the Babylonian *golah* was made up of those elements that favoured national independence (and thus were opposed to the Jeremiah's 'surrender-to-the-enemy' group) and held to Jerusalem-centred Yahwistic theology. A prominent victim of this group was the chief priest Seraiah who was executed by the Babylonians (2 Kgs 25:18-21), his grandson Jehozadak

who claimed to prophesy the return of the King Jehoiachin, the temple vessels and all captives (Jer 28:2-4). Not surprisingly, this prophet is located in Jerusalem and condemned for such a view by Jeremiah. A similar notion might lie behind the letter of Shemaiah sent from Babylon (Jer 29:24-28) to silence Jeremiah and prevent him from proclaiming a lengthy stay in exile.⁹⁵ The national restoration hope that centred on King Jehoiachin is absent in Ezekiel. In Jeremiah it is both in Yehud and the *golah*.

It is difficult to associate any significant return ideology with the province/imperial colony of Yehud. Yehud belonged to the satrapy called Beyond the River and covered mainly the Judean hill country, approximately fifteen miles to the north and south of Jerusalem.⁹⁶ Thus, Yehud was significantly smaller than the concept of Israel or the kingdom of Judah. Some even suggest that Hebron, Judah's second most important city with the ancient patriarchal burial site, was located outside the province.⁹⁷ With its low status in the Babylonian and Persian period, Yehud did not aspire to hope for national restoration. Yehud was a dependent Persian province and was expected to pay a heavy annual tribute to its overlords. As long as the Persian administration looked strong, the return movement would always remain a future project but inevitably the people looked for the slightest signs of hope of change.

went into exile (1 Chr 6:14) but Joshua, son of Jehozadek, led a group of returnees, together with Zerubbabel, back to Yehud in 520 BCE.

⁹⁵ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 99.

⁹⁶ See Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 354-355, for more details on the boundaries of Yehud.

⁹⁷ See Josette Elayi and Jean Sapin, *Beyond the River: New Perspectives on Transeuphratene* (JSOTSup 250; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 18; Charles Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud*, 82; Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732-332 B.C.E.)* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 444; Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 183.

The other question that needs to be addressed is whether the Babylonian *golah* in the Persian period would have been the most likely candidate for formulating a vision of imminent national restoration. Other 'diaspora' texts, such as the Joseph story (Genesis 37-50), all narratives in Genesis involving foreign kings and the books of Esther, Daniel 1-6 and Tobit, do not raise the issue of national independence or the establishment of indigenous rule. These texts share to a high degree the submissive attitude towards the foreign ruler as being divinely appointed by YHWH.

Correspondence between the exiles and those who remained gave both sides a clear picture of each other's situation. Jeremiah sent his letter to the exiles through entrusted messengers (Jer 29:3), while Hanani (Neh 1:2) travelled from Judah to the citadel in Susa and spoke to Nehemiah there about the situation of the exiles. If a form of communication between the exiles in Babylon and those who stayed behind can be assumed (the Elephantine correspondence stands as proof of this), then it becomes clear why there was a lack of eagerness on the side of the exiles to return to Yehud. Yehud did not offer any hope for financial security to its inhabitants, especially as trade was disrupted and the exiles' ancestral land had been re-distributed and needed to be reclaimed from other Yehudites (if possible) or even from people of other nationalities who had now settled there. In fact, Yehud might not have been the ancestral homeland of the exiles at all, because they may have been refugees from one of the northern tribes or even from other locations, such as Hebron or the Beersheba valley. All of this falls short of the promised glorious return from exile and might have convinced people, based on close adherence to prophetic voices such as of Jeremiah, to 'build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce' (Jer 29:5; 28).

The representation of the restoration in Ezra-Nehemiah is shown as a *partial* restoration.⁹⁸ This restoration falls short of the evoked images of

⁹⁸ Sara Japhet concludes similarly for the Chronicler's view of the restoration, 'the Chronicler is not satisfied with the reality of 'the restoration' either. In Ezra-Nehemiah the new beginning initiated by Cyrus's decree forms the basis for the restoration of Israel. In Chronicles, by contrast, the first sentences of

a second exodus, thus effectively leaving the completion of the restoration for the future. The Ezra restoration is effectively a turning around of the history of Israel, from conquest to the establishment of the monarchy, to the final building of the temple. The starting point in Ezra is the building of the temple. This narration either opts to neglect the return movement that establishes a worshipping community in the land or simply describes the most important institution first – the temple, indicating that the essential institution for the reform of the hearts of the people is now in the land and the other institution (of a sovereign independent Yehud) will be established when the time is right. The exilic experience highlighted for the diaspora community the need for a renewed heart in order that YHWH would take up his residency in the temple in Jerusalem again. The prophet Ezekiel records the departure of the glory of YHWH (Ezekiel 10-11), yet the rededication of the temple in Ezra 6:13-18 does not explicitly record the return of YHWH to Jerusalem. The prophet Haggai in 520 BCE, when counselling those who are disappointed by the size of the Second Temple, also uses an image of partial fulfilment – ‘my Spirit remains in your midst’ (Hag 2:5) but his dwelling will be in the temple only ‘in a little while’ (Hag 2:6) - in the coming eschaton.⁹⁹ Ezekiel 43:1-9 envisions the full return and an eternal dwelling of YHWH’s glory in Ezekiel’s new temple.¹⁰⁰ Overall, the return in Ezra-Nehemiah draws on the image of the conquest of the land

the same decree constitute the end of the story. The decree of Cyrus is presented in Chronicles indeed as a beginning of a change, but it is not followed by fulfilment, because what has been described in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah cannot count. Fulfillment is still ahead, a matter of the future. The Chronicler’s whole view of history is a clear pointer to a future, when Israel will achieve its true destiny.’ See Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 166.

⁹⁹ Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WBC 32; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1984), 158.

¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to note that the vision of the new temple is regarded in its *Grundschrift* as part of the early *golah*-redaction of the book of Ezekiel; see Thilo Alexander Rudnig, "Ezechiel 40-48: Die Vision vom neuen Tempel und der neuen Ordnung im Land," in *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezechiel) Kapitel 20-48* (ed. Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann; ATD 22/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 532.

but stops short of achieving anything more than rebuilding the temple, the walls, houses and the reorganization of the community.¹⁰¹

A further point to consider must be the nature of the future restoration. Ackroyd points out that the theological vision of the restoration, prompted by the sin and guilt that led to the exile, can only envision restoration of a religiously reformed community.¹⁰² This consideration cannot be underestimated. It must have had a profound impact on the exiled priestly class, which seems to have prompted the whole reform movement that developed in the Babylonian *golah*. In order to learn from history and not to repeat the sins that led to the exile in the first place - the 'syncretistic' form of poly-Yahwism and the disregard for the divine will – the exiles needed to understand the necessity for reform and re-assessment of the pre-exilic Yahwisms.

All of these considerations regarding the nature of the restoration point to the conclusion that the restoration, as described in the biblical books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah, had not yet taken place but would happen in the future. This point is also reflected in the Chronicler's late theological reconstruction. Sara Japhet notes that the restoration of the nation is a programme for the future. It has not yet occurred but is expected to come.¹⁰³ The same theological idea is highlighted by the author of Second-Isaiah, who is generally thought of as being located in the Babylonian diaspora. He uses the motif of the not yet fulfilled second exodus motif that will lead to national restoration.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 158.

¹⁰² Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, 58.

¹⁰³ Sara Japhet, "Exile and Restoration in the Book of Chronicles," 43. The Chronicler's reconstruction also makes a unique distinction in relation to 'all Israel' and 'Judah,' a view that has as its starting point a land-perspective as opposed to the diaspora-perspective. The Chronicler admits that there was a partial exile, limited to seventy years but 'all Israel' never left the land completely. See especially Sara Japhet, "Exile and Restoration in the Book of Chronicles," 42.

¹⁰⁴ Marjo C. A. Korpel, "Second Isaiah's Coping with the Religious Crisis," 104.

Chapter 4: The *Golah*

Notions of national restoration and the return from exile (and the intrinsically linked question of the end of the exile) must have undergone a tremendous readjustment in the course of the exile. In the early exilic period, high hopes of national restoration are apparent in the Babylonian *golah*. These hopes are not supported in Jeremiah's 'letter to the exiles' in Jeremiah 29 (cf. Ezekiel 17). The restoration will not take place immediately (Jer 29:8-10) but only after seventy years in Babylon will restoration for the diaspora occur (cf. Jer 29:14).

The restoration is relocated in the future, beyond the lifetime of the present generation of exiles. In relation to the future restoration, it does not give details (whether it will be a royal national restoration or primarily a religious restoration) beyond the general picture of a return to Yehud. The prophecy is clearly addressed to 'the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets and all the people,' (Jer 29:1) leaving out the royal family. There are two references in Jeremiah 29 to the royal house. The first is used to locate the addressed diaspora historically as the 597 *golah* (Jer 29:2 and the reference to King Jeconiah); the second is a prophecy spoken about the royal house:

Thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile: Thus says the LORD of hosts, behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten. I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the LORD, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the LORD. (Jer 29:16-19)

The following verses deal specifically and personally with Ahab, son of Kolaiah, Zedekiah, son of Maaseiah, (Jer 29:22-23) and Shemaiah son of

Nehelam (Jer 29:31-32), three prophets who all uttered false prophecies about an immediate (and national?) restoration in 594 BCE.¹⁰⁵ In Jeremiah's reply to Shemaiah, his prophecy is explicitly linked to 'rebellion against the LORD' (Jer 29:32). The immediate and impending end to the rebellious priests at the hand of the Babylonian imperial administration, and its condemnation by the prophet Jeremiah, were both understood by the Babylonian *golah* as signifying the end of their vocalisation of hopes of national restoration. These verses further point to an early struggle regarding the meaning and length of the exile, a discussion that the Babylonian *golah* present as finally addressed and closed even prior to the 587 deportation. A further punitive action of Babylonian rule was the fall of Jerusalem, when King Zedekiah's sons were slaughtered and the king mutilated, chained and deported to Babylon (2 Kgs 25:7). This was followed by 'Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest and the three keepers of the threshold' (2 Kgs 25:18), representatives of the temple, together with representatives from the army, members of the king's council and a number of men from the people of the land, all executed for their rebellion against Babylonian rule.¹⁰⁶ These actions, together with the arrival of a mutilated, chained King Zedekiah, must surely have silenced the Babylonian *golah* once and for all and all aspirations of national restoration would have been crushed.

Thus, it seems fair to conclude that national restoration was not on the immediate agenda of the Babylonian *golah*.¹⁰⁷ After the fall of Jerusalem, all hopes for national restoration were put on hold for the present

¹⁰⁵ I follow here the reconstruction that Nebuchadnezzar would not simply punish these prophets for adultery. The context of the chapter also seems to suggest that these prophets had something to do with rebellion and likely stirred up feelings of imminent national restoration. See, J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), 549.

¹⁰⁶ For Seraiah being a leader of the rebellious 'national-religious party,' see Rainer Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," 4-5.

¹⁰⁷ For a similar conclusion regarding the Davidic restoration, see Donald Murray, "Of All the Years the Hopes: Or Fears? Jehoiachin in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27-30)," esp. 263. Contra Rainer Albertz, "Wer waren die Deuteronomisten?," 319-338.

(or for at least as long as the Babylonians ruled, or until Jerusalem's fortune changed).¹⁰⁸ Two groups potentially kept the hope for an immediate return back to Jerusalem alive: the members of the Davidic royal house, who in all probability dreamed of their re-inauguration sometime in the future and members of the Jerusalem priestly temple community, likely to have been related to the Hilkiah family, who were high priests before the exile (the executed Seraiah before 587 BCE). After the return, from 520 BCE onwards, Joshua, son of Jehozadak may well have inspired hope for national restoration.

On account of the imprisonment of members of the royal house of Judah, it seems plausible to suspect that priestly circles, together with the elders of the exile, were primarily responsible for the *golah* view that favoured religious reformation and restoration over a political restoration. Perhaps as part of later development, they blamed the downfall of Judah and the exile on the royal house, thereby establishing priestly independence for the sake of religious reforms and thus ultimately disassociating the priestly class from the monarchical establishment.

4.5. The Lack of a Distinct Diaspora Theology

This section examines the reason why in the Hebrew Bible no clear diaspora theology has been developed. The starting points for reflection are the Jewish diaspora communities in the Greco-Roman period. This is followed by some observations from the Hebrew Bible. The Greco-Roman period in Jewish diaspora existence falls outside the scope of this study but, as a point of comparison, a few considerations about the

¹⁰⁸ The situation in Yehud was probably different; there, national, even monarchic, restoration ideology was kept alive by its citizens who suffered from oppressive Babylonian taxation and who looked for a remedy. The prophecy of Haggai fits this picture; though a returnee himself his view portrays a non-*golah* attitude. For a discussion of Haggai and Zechariah belonging to the *golah*; see 4.2 of this study. Yet for the *golah* in Babylon as a small minority in a foreign land this meant that their direct survival was linked to developing a good working relationship with the Babylonian imperial administration.

general mindset of Jewish diaspora communities in this period might be helpful to an examination of the earliest diaspora in Babylon. One of the difficulties for understanding the early Jewish diaspora is the scarcity of surviving diasporic writings. No full diaspora account is available and only snapshots of diaspora life have survived.¹⁰⁹

The Greco-Roman period was formative for the development of the diaspora, in light of the fact that both geographically and numerically, the diaspora spread along the shores of the Mediterranean. The diaspora was built on the heritage of the preceding centuries, although a widespread diaspora was only established in the Hellenistic period. Contributing factors were the Babylonian exile but also political and religious pressure and the economic prospect of living abroad in countries like Egypt.¹¹⁰ Erich S. Gruen is aware of the magnitude of the term *diaspora* for Jewish self-understanding throughout their history, as it constituted the defining characteristic of their experience.¹¹¹ Yet Gruen would challenge the centrality of exile for the self-understanding of diaspora Judaism in the Greco-Roman period. He rejects the idea that Jewish consciousness was haunted by the repetition of having escaped exile and of the fear that dispersion and exile would be a continuous feature of diaspora life. He points out that this school of thought is only associated with later developments in Judaism, especially with Zionism. Such an understanding should not guide the interpretation of Jewish diaspora communities in antiquity. He highlights the fact that diaspora Jews in the Second Temple period did not, and were not compelled to, develop a theory or philosophy of diaspora.¹¹² This is theologically even more striking when the centrality of the land, Jerusalem, Mount Zion

¹⁰⁹ Denise McCoskey, "Diaspora in the Reading of Jewish History, Identity, and Difference," 392.

¹¹⁰ Menahem Stern, "Diaspora." *EnJud* 6:8-19.

¹¹¹ Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, 1.

¹¹² Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, 6. A question of comparison between the diaspora situation under Hellenistic control and that of the diaspora under Persian control nevertheless remains. In relation to the lack of theorising about the diaspora situation the general outlook between the two empires seems to be comparable.

and the temple are taken into account. It seems that living beyond the homeland was a natural part of the Jewish experience.¹¹³

A similar view can be seen in Philo. He understands Jerusalem as the metropolis and places of Jewish settlement as her 'colonies.'¹¹⁴ The question raised by Philo is to what degree the concept of *diaspora* corresponds to that of a colony. The term *colony* in a modern understanding points to superiority of authority in the centre, with the diaspora on the periphery. However, in antiquity colonies were independent of the metropolis from which they originated. Nevertheless, they gave the metropolis from which they originated a place of honour but not more. The idea of superiority of the homeland over the diaspora is absent from the writings of Philo. It appears that he was using a contemporary Greek model, which he used for the Jewish context. Colonies keep a close and vibrant link to the *patris*/homeland and to the metropolis. Gruen concludes his work with the following statement:

The respect and awe paid to the Holy Land by Jews living elsewhere stood in full harmony with commitment to local community and allegiance to Gentile governance. Diaspora Jews did not bewail their fate or pine away from the homeland. Nor, by contrast, did they ignore the homeland and regard the Book as surrogate for the Temple. The postulated alternatives are severe and simplistic. Palestine mattered, and it mattered in a territorial sense – but not as a required residence. Gifts to the Temple and pilgrimages to Jerusalem announced simultaneously a devotion

¹¹³ 'Jews living around the Mediterranean were unapologetic and unembarrassed by their situation. They did not describe themselves as part of a diaspora. They did not suggest that they were cut off from the centre, leading a fragmented, and unfulfilled existence. Peoples from communities and nations everywhere settled outside their places of origin in the fluid and mobile Hellenistic world without abandoning their identities as Athenians, Macedonians, Phoenicians, Antiochenes, or Egyptians. The Jews could eschew justification, rationalization, or tortured explanation of their choice of residence. They felt no need to construct a theory of diaspora.' See Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, 243.

¹¹⁴ Sarah Pearce, "Jerusalem as 'Mother-City' in the Writings of Philo of Alexandria," 19-36.

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to the symbolic heart of Judaism and a singular pride in the accomplishments of the diaspora.¹¹⁵

The Babylonian *golah* did not develop a distinct diaspora theology that would highlight the two major concerns intrinsic to being a diaspora, namely the lack of a physical return and a general justification for living abroad. Other theological concerns, like the submission to foreign rulers, the global presence and accessibility of YHWH and the rejection of Zion and the Davidic dynasty (and kingship in general) were prominent in the diaspora but also found their correspondence among groups in Yehud.

Historically, the Judahite diaspora did not indicate a strong desire for return or a view that return to the homeland is essential.¹¹⁶ Shemaryahu Talmon, commenting on the Judahite notion of restoration in antiquity, assumes that exile is automatically followed by a desire for return. For him the rightful place for exiles is in their homeland. He continues to say that exile results in a physically, historically, socially and even theologically marginalized existence.¹¹⁷ The well-researched Jewish diaspora in the Hellenistic period gives countless examples of an attitude of the Jewish diaspora who did not think that their existence away from the homeland was in any way inferior. The fact that Jewish diaspora communities existed throughout the Second Temple period is indication enough that a physical return was not their most important priority.

There is an implicit theology in the Hebrew Bible that sees no disadvantage in living in the diaspora rather than residing in the homeland.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Erich Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, 252.

¹¹⁶ Piotr Lorek in his PhD thesis simply assumes that return is an intrinsic feature of the exilic mind, without discussing, proving or justifying it in any detail; see Piotr Lorek, "Motif of Exile in the Hebrew Bible", 23.

¹¹⁷ Shemaryahu Talmon, "'Exile' and 'Restoration'," 110. Talmon set out to study the Jewish experience of exile and restoration in antiquity (including the Hebrew Bible) but surprisingly, his study does not include a comprehensive treatment of Jewish diaspora communities in the Second Temple period.

¹¹⁸ In narrating Cyrus' 'restoration' return the exiled priest Josephus also 'omits the statement that the Jews are to be gathered from all the places all over the earth where they have been scattered.' See Louis H. Feldman, "Restoration in

This is highlighted by diaspora heroes like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Esther, Daniel and even Moses, who either always lived outside their homeland, like Esther and Moses, or settled for long periods in foreign lands, as Abraham did, or who left the homeland for one reason or another, never to return to it alive, such as Jacob, Joseph and Daniel. The same theme is found in Solomon's prayer of the dedication of the First Temple, which also mentions prayer towards the temple with regards to a future exile (1 Kgs 8:38) but which does not include a plea for return. The prayer only contains the request for compassion from those who carried the people away (1 Kgs 8:50).¹¹⁹ McConville, in his study of restoration in Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic literature, notes that the prospect of a permanent occupation of the land is viewed as theologically problematic. He gives the example of Deuteronomy 1, in which the question is raised as to whether Israel has sufficient faith to enter the land.¹²⁰ Thus, it should not be assumed that immediate physical return was an important guiding factor in the mindset of the earliest diaspora communities in Mesopotamia.

It is wrongly assumed that the *golah* needed some justification for its continuous existence abroad. Niels Peter Lemche suggests that the prominence of the journeys from Babylon through Palestine to Egypt reflect the notion of travel between the homeland and the diaspora. He is very much aware that, historically, a return restoration did not materialise and for that reason he uses the word *travel* to describe the contacts between the diaspora and Yehud. He continues to argue that the diaspora authors of the Pentateuch developed it as a diaspora literature in order to justify their claims regarding their legitimate lineage and their origin in the homeland.¹²¹ In contrast to Lemche's theory, it is clear that neither the diaspora-favouring books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah nor

Josephus," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 223-261, esp. 229.

¹¹⁹ See J. G. McConville, "Restoration in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic Literature," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 11-40, esp. 38.

¹²⁰ J. G. McConville, "Restoration in Deuteronomy," 12-13.

¹²¹ Niels Peter Lemche, *Prelude to Israel's Past*, 224-225.

the *golah* homeland mission in Ezra-Nehemiah provide an indication that, from the point of view of the Babylonian *golah*, there was any need to justify their existence in Babylon. Rather, the Babylonian *golah* in its location on foreign soil can claim that their existence there is divinely sanctioned and even an obedient response to a prophetic word (cf. Jeremiah 24). The Babylonian *golah's* attempts to influence the religious outlook of Yehud point to the *golah's* self-understanding of having been chosen to preserve and promote the ancestral religion. The narrative of Ezra-Nehemiah evokes tension in the 'restoration period' but not enough to justify the need for the Babylonian *golah* to justify their existence abroad. The books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah lend themselves much more to Lemche's supposed justification, yet justification for their own existence is missing.

The term *land* has experienced a renaissance in recent years and has become a key interpretative tool. Nevertheless, historically Jews were quite willing to turn their backs on the Promised Land and seek an earthly livelihood in other lands while retaining 'land' as a future/eschatological hope. In Jeremiah's time, a diasporic community was formed in Egypt, 'and yet we hear nothing about any return to Zion by the Jewish diaspora of Egypt when that country was conquered by the Persian king, Cambyses in 525 BCE.'¹²² Jews settled in Elephantine from the sixth century onwards;¹²³ the tolerant attitude of the Ptolemaic kings increased the migration of Jews to Egypt;¹²⁴ Antiochus III (223-187 BC) settled 2,000 Babylonian Jewish families in Phrygia and Lydia; the Romans requested in 142 BC that the rights of the Jewish population of

¹²² Bustenay Oded, "Judah and the Exile," in *Israelite and Judaeon History* (ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller; London: SCM Press, 1977), 435-488, esp. 488.

¹²³ The oldest papyri found at Elephantine date to 495 BCE but the origin and founding of the colony of Elephantine is unknown.

¹²⁴ When Ptolemy I left Syria in 315 BCE many of the Jews voluntarily followed him and settled in Egypt (*Ant* 12:9). A similar, yet religiously motivated 'exodus' happened when the son of the high priest Onias left for Egypt with a considerable number of his followers and set up a rival temple at Leontopolis (*Ant* 13:4).

Cyprus be respected (see also 1 Macc 15:23); Josephus described Syria as the country with the highest percentage of Jews;¹²⁵ and Philo records that by the first century AD, the Jews in Roman Egypt numbered a million people.

4.6 Conclusion

So far the assumption has been that exile and restoration are *intrinsically* linked. However, the research of Rom-Shiloni highlights the ambiguity relating to return being an intrinsic part of a theology of exile. It holds that utter destruction is the result of breaking the covenant but that restoration is rarely envisioned. However, in the course of the exile, this theological position was altered and restoration to the land became prominent. This theological shift can best be associated with the special preservative election of the 597 *golah* as highlighted by the prophecy in Jeremiah 24. The nature of the restoration envisioned by the Babylonian *golah* was non-political for a number of reasons. The kings of Israel and Judah had failed their people and led them astray and this resulted in a number of deportations. Therefore, the religious leaders did not favour a return under the authority of an earthly king. The Babylonian and Persian empires rewarded loyalty and punished dissent severely and this resulted in a pragmatic and non-political *golah*.

¹²⁵ Ephraim Stern, "Diaspora," 6:10.

Chapter 5:

The Influence of Diaspora Concerns on Genesis

5.1. Introduction

Having established in chapter 4 the theological influence of the Babylonian *golah* on the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, aided by insights from 2 Kings, Deutero-Isaiah and Ezra-Nehemiah, this chapter examines the impact of the *golah* on Genesis. In doing so, it also looks at the recent developments in source criticism, the question of literary production in Babylon and the influences of diaspora theology and ANE historiography on Genesis. It also traces the influence and presence of *golah* theology with regard to monotheism, inclusivism, the lack of prescriptions for a political or civic order (non-political) and the unlimited geographical presence of YHWH in the book of Genesis.

Two preliminary statements concerning the nature of ‘exilic’ literature should be made. Firstly, the common literary distinctions between pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic need to be re-thought as they do not take into account the new realities and concerns of the emerging diaspora communities. Defining the exilic period as dating from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587/586 BCE until the return in 538 BCE (or until work on the Second Temple began again in 520 BCE) is ultimately a Jerusalem-centred view.¹ This is heavily influenced by the restoration theme in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah. Ezra-Nehemiah and the Chronicler (especially 2 Chr 36:20-21) are just a few of the biblical voices commenting on the Judahite fate of statelessness and it should be noted that they exclude any notion of political independence.² As a

¹ See for example, Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 1-2.

² In the biblical writings of this period, life under Persian jurisdiction is hardly contested and the restoration of political independence is postponed to the Messianic age. More weight should then be given to interpretations that exclude political restoration but envision Jewish life dedicated to YHWH, separated from political power and the idea of a national state. This would be in line with the announcements of the prophet Samuel that Israel should not have a king. The ensuing ‘history’ (its remembrance in the narratives) of the

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result, Carroll is right in his criticism that the period of well-defined exile is a 'Jerusalem or Palestinian-orientated point of view.' From the diasporic point of view, life in the diaspora might not have been seen as exile at all.³ Therefore, it is necessary to see the diasporic perspective as a distinctly different view - another voice of Judahite existence and struggle. Diaspora is a distinctive category beyond those that already exist.

Diaspora is marked by a generally conservative and traditional attitude, especially in religious matters. It is an attitude that preserves rather than invents, yet at the same time the diaspora is also a place of creative reformulation of ancient traditions in light of a new reality. One good example of this can be observed in the calendar innovations that are traced by Jan A. Wagenaar. These are the pre-exilic priestly regulations concerning the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread and their post-exilic counterparts.⁴ The celebration of the Festival of Unleavened Bread in Ezek 45:18-25 follows the Babylonian biannual structure, which has a New Year festival in the first month and in the seventh month. Overall, the festive activities are not changed, they are only slightly adjusted to suit the new context. The same attitude is observable in the onomastics of both the Elephantine and the Mesopotamian diasporas, which show the continuation of known Judahite names in the diaspora.

There is a noticeable shift in studying the literature of the Old Testament: the interpretative focus has moved to post-exilic Judaism and its struggle with its new colonized identity.⁵ Thus, the Hebrew Bible is

kingdoms is then a commentary on Samuel's prophecy, finding its historical anti-climax in Ishmael, a descendant of King David, who tries to usurp the throne, kills the chosen leader, butchers pilgrims in the temple and takes the people captive (Jeremiah 41).

³ Robert P. Carroll, "Exile! What Exile?," 67.

⁴ Jan A. Wagenaar, "Post-Exilic Calendar Innovations: The First Month of the Year and the Date of Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread," *ZAW* 115, no. 1 (2003): 3-24.

⁵ For a summary of recent scholarship and the shift towards the Persian and Hellenistic period; see Christoph Levin, "Das Alte Testament auf dem Weg zu seiner Theologie," *ZThK* 105, no. 2 (2008): 125-145.

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understood as the foundation not of a state or society but rather of a religious community. Traditionally Rabbinic Judaism ascribed the authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses. One of the reasons for this is the recognition that much of the Pentateuch's exilic or diaspora nature is anchored in Moses' personal experience.⁶ The narratives and motifs of the Pentateuch and of Genesis in particular reflect a condition of homelessness and wandering, dislocation and uprootedness. Moses, who was born and lived in a foreign land and was never to reach the promised homeland, epitomises in his personal experience the diaspora existence of the *golah*. Therefore, it is important to focus attention on the influence of the Babylonian *golah* on the narratives in Genesis.

It is possible that the Babylonian *golah* might only be the second diaspora community influential in redacting the texts of Genesis. The traditions that spoke to the Mesopotamian diaspora might have their initial origins in the exile of the Ephraimite diaspora in Judah after the fall of Samaria in 721 BCE.⁷ Archaeological evidence points to a sudden growth of settlements on the Western Hill of Jerusalem which tripled or quadrupled in size around 700 BCE.⁸ The presence of the Ephraimite diaspora in Judah, and especially in Jerusalem, would explain the presence of these northern traditions in Judah. The above description is a possible explanation for the sudden growth of Jerusalem, yet it is archaeologically difficult to date this expansion precisely beyond the eighth century BCE. It is also possible that the new settlers are refugees from other Judahite sites destroyed in the warfare.⁹

Ernst Axel Knauf challenges this assumption and suggests instead that the northern traditions came via the temple archives of Bethel to Judah. This took place when Bethel became part of Judah sometime in the

⁶ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 69.

⁷ Karel van der Toorn, "Near Eastern Communities in the Diaspora," 64-68.

⁸ Karel van der Toorn, "Near Eastern Communities in the Diaspora," 66.

⁹ For an engaging discussion, see Diana Edelman, "Hezekiah's Alleged Cultic Centralization," *JSOT* 32, no. 4 (2008): 395-434.

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seventh century BCE.¹⁰ Knauf's suggestion is plausible and cannot easily be contested purely on the basis of the presence of exilic motifs of dislocation and uprootedness in the narratives of Genesis.¹¹ The one point that counters an origin in the Ephraimite diaspora is the segregatory attitude of the patriarchs in relation to finding wives for their sons from among the people of the land. It is not easily conceivable that an Ephraimite diaspora in Judah would segregate themselves from the Judahite population living in the land and this segregatory attitude would only encourage Ephraimites to intermarry with diasporic Israelites in Northern Syria. For a diaspora community settled in a foreign land, the attitude of maintaining long-distance ethnic relations is more plausible.

The exile marked a watershed in the political history of the kingdom of Judah, as independence was lost until the Maccabees revolted in 167 BCE. One influence was felt in the religious realm, as new realities needed to be faced and addressed: worship without a temple (highly significant for the displaced Jerusalemite priests and Levites); the diasporic existence of substantial parts of the population; the question of maintaining religious Yahwistic/Judahite boundary/identity markers; and the question of restoration and its nature (political or religious or both). The exile marks the traditional dividing line between Yahwism and Judaism, at least it is the starting point for the development of the latter.¹² Berquist suggests another helpful label for the periods of

¹⁰ Ernst Axel Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 291-349, esp. 295-296.

¹¹ Christoph Levin attempts to link the uprootedness of these northern traditions directly to the living situation of the Ephraimite diaspora; see Christoph Levin, "Das Alte Testament auf dem Weg zu seiner Theologie," 136-137.

¹² Jill Middlemas, *The Trouble of Templeless Judah* (OTM; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3; also D. Winton Thomas, "The Sixth Century B.C.: A Creative Epoch in the History of Israel," *JSS* 6, no. 1 (1961): 33-46.

foreign domination and occupation: the 'colonial period.'¹³ His suggestion is helpful, considering the interplay and tensions in Yehud between the local population, imperial representatives in the province and financial and other forms of provincial tributes and demands for the central imperial administration.

5.2. The Exile, Genesis and Source Criticism

Traditionally, the four sources that make up Genesis were dated as follows: J (Yahwistic source – 10/9 century), E (Elohistic source – 9/8 century), D (Deuteronomic source - 7th century) and P (Priestly source - 6/5 century).¹⁴ Gordon Wenham summarises the final make up of Genesis as follows: J comprising about half, E about a third and P about a sixth of the book.¹⁵ Currently, the scholarly consensus is moving in a new direction, after it became more apparent that the differentiation between E and J can no longer be upheld.¹⁶ The current discussion focuses mainly on the difference between priestly and non-priestly material.¹⁷ This leaves Genesis with an overwhelming majority of non-

¹³ Jon L. Berquist, "The Shifting Frontier: The Achaemenid Empire's Treatment of Western Colonies," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 1, no. 17 (1995): 49-68, esp. 2 [of the PDF], [accessed 24.04.2018]. Online: <http://jwsr.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/jwsr/article/view/48/60>.

¹⁴ Sometimes source critical distinctions are abandoned in favour of an independent novella, for example in Golka's reading of Genesis 37-50 as an Israel-Joseph story; see Friedemann W. Golka, "Genesis 37-50: Joseph Story or Israel-Joseph Story?," *CBR* 2, no. 2 (2004): 153-177.

¹⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC 1; Dallas: Word Books, 1987), xxvi.

¹⁶ See Erhard Blum, "The Literary Connection between the Books of Genesis and Exodus and the End of the Book of Joshua," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 89-106, esp. 89; or Rolf Rendtorff, "Directions in Pentateuchal Studies," *CurBS* 5 (1997): 43-65.

¹⁷ Samuel E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship* (OBT; Minneapolis, Mass.: Fortress Press, 1999), 39. See also Erhard Blum, "The Literary Connection between the Books of Genesis and Exodus and the End of the Book of

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priestly material (e.g. J/E material) and a few priestly additions, primarily in chapters 1, 5, 17, 23.¹⁸ The Abrahamic covenant of circumcision, in Genesis 17, with its dual exilic emphasis on circumcision and the 'eternal covenant,' remains valid and independent of the obedience of the people.¹⁹ In relation to Genesis, therefore, the question needs to be asked if P was ever an independent source or only a late redactional layer.²⁰ For Genesis it seems fair to conclude that, especially in the patriarchal narratives, the evidence for P is much smaller and more amenable to a 'supplementary' interpretation.²¹ Notable also is the lack

Joshua," 89; Eckart Otto, "Scribal Scholarship in the Formation of Torah and Prophets: A Postexilic Scribal Debate between Priestly Scholarship and Literary Prophecy - The Example of the Book of Jeremiah and Its Relation to the Pentateuch," in *The Pentateuch as Torah* (ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 171-184, esp. 172; Georg Fischer, "Zur Lage der Pentateuchforschung," ZAW 115, no. 4 (2003): 608-616.

¹⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, xxxi. For detailed outlines of P in Genesis, see David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 124-125 or Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament* (2 ed., UTB 2745; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 231.

¹⁹ Hans-Christoph Schmitt, *Arbeitsbuch zum Alten Testament* (UTB 2146; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 195-197. See also Kenton Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 282, who notes that prior to the exile circumcision was not a distinct mark of Israelite identity. Similarly, Shaye J. D. Cohen argues that circumcision became *the* Jewish identity marker only in the Maccabean period for the Jews in Palestine, see Shaye J.D. Cohen, "'Those Who Say They Are Jews and Are Not': How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?," in *Diasporas in Antiquity* (ed. Shaye J.D. Cohen and Ernest S. Frerichs; BJS 288; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 1-45, esp. 13.

²⁰ See Frank Cross who argues that P is only a redactional layer in Genesis. He holds the same view for the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers; see Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 305-321.

²¹ Graham I. Davies, "The Composition of the Book of Exodus: Reflections on the Theses of Erhard Blum," in *Texts, Temples and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran* (ed. Michael V. Fox, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns,

of any serious deuteronomistic material, especially in light of the supposed exilic redaction of both the Priestly source and the Deuteronomistic History. How is it that the two supposed exilic sources do not have a proportional representation in Genesis, even though the narratives of Genesis are full of references to exile and dislocation?

5.2.1. *The Yahwist (J)*

The dominant theory for the combination of the different Pentateuch sources is, in varied forms, Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis.²² Wellhausen theorised that J (*der Jahwist* – the Yahwist) reflected a time before the centralisation of worship in Jerusalem and, as there were also references in J to the rule of kings, it was dated to the early monarchy. Two scholars on the forefront of dating J to the exilic period are John Van Seters and Christoph Levin.²³ Van Seters proposes a re-dating of J to the exilic and P to the post-exilic period.²⁴ The reason for his proposal of a re-dating is based on the assumption that 'this dating does not prejudice the age of the material within the sources but it indi-

1996), 71-86, esp. 84. For the argument of the independence of P in Genesis, see J. A. Emerton, "The Priestly Writer in Genesis," *JTS* 39 (1988): 381-400.

²² For a recent discussion on the history of research and current issues, see Thomas C. Römer, "The Elusive Yahwist: A Short History of Research," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 9-27.

²³ Wellhausen's classical 'New Documentary Hypothesis' assumed the joining of J and E after the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE. See Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 200-201. See also the discussion in Alastair G. Hunter, "Father Abraham," 3-27. Another scholar who dates J to the exilic period is H.H. Schmid; for a discussion and further reference to his work, see E. Theodore Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*, esp. 63.

²⁴ John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), 310.

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cates the historical perspective in which each author is to be understood.²⁵ Thus, anachronistic references for the second millennium BCE setting of the ancient patriarchal narratives (e.g. camels, Arameans, Arabs) point to the historical location of the editor.²⁶ Van Seters locates his Yahwist in the Babylonian *golah*, between the theologies of early exilic Ezekiel and late exilic Second Isaiah.²⁷ He points, among others, to the thematic similarities between the portrayal of reluctance to destroy the disobedient people in Ezekiel and J and the presence of references to a 'small sanctuary' (Ezek 11:16 cf. Exod 33:7-11).²⁸ David M. Carr also dates what he calls 'proto-Genesis,' which corresponds with the J source, to the late pre-exilic or early exilic period.²⁹ His arguments are based on the appreciation of the way the royal ideology and the traditions of personal piety are used to speak to the community in exile, especially his observation that the royal motif in Genesis is re-

²⁵ John Van Seters, "The Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)," in *The Hebrew Bible Today: An Introduction to Critical Issues* (ed. Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 3-49, esp. 14.

²⁶ John Van Seters in "The Pentateuch" discusses the anachronistic references of the assumed second millennium setting of camels (pp. 15-17), the uncharacteristic nature of the nomadism of the patriarchs (pp. 15-20), the knowledge of prominent Assyrian cities like Ur and Haran (pp. 23-26), the prominence of the Arameans (pp. 33-34), the interrelation with the Arabs and Edomites (pp. 35-37).

²⁷ John Van Seters, "In the Babylonian Exile with J: Between Judgment in Ezekiel and Salvation in Second Isaiah," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 71-89, esp. 72. He sees a close theological correspondence between J and Second Isaiah; see John Van Seters, "The Origins of the Hebrew Bible: Some New Answers to Old Questions Part Two," *JANER* 7, no. 2 (2007): 219-237, esp. 228.

²⁸ John Van Seters, "In the Babylonian Exile with J," 75-78.

²⁹ David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 232.

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appropriated away from a royal figure to the ancestor of the nation and subsequently, to the nation.³⁰

Christoph Levin identifies six narrative cycles in the Yahwist source,³¹ which are all set outside the land of Israel and portray the main characters as strangers.³² He subsequently locates the Yahwist among the early Judahite diaspora in Babylon following the 597 deportation. The origin of the Yahwist's work in Babylon best explains its universal horizon and the wide acceptance of non-Israelite material.³³ The

³⁰ David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 229-232. For the diaspora's use of these two concepts see also chapter 6 of this study.

³¹ The first block is the 'primeval history' (Genesis 1–11), the second block is the 'history of the patriarchs' (Genesis 12–36), the third block the 'story of Joseph and his brothers' (Genesis 37; 39–45), the fourth the 'stories about Moses' (esp. Exodus 2-4), the fifth block describes the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their wanderings through the desert. The sixth narrative block is about the seer Balaam (Numbers 22-24) and it has been interpolated into the fifth block; see Christoph Levin, "The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch," *JBL* 126, no. 2 (2007): 209–230, esp. 213-217.

³² See Christoph Levin, "The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch," 218. Christoph Levin, *Das Alte Testament* (München: C. H. Beck, 2006), 52 notes that the Yahwist understands YHWH to be a universal deity ('God of heaven and God of the earth' cf. Gen 24:3, 7) and thus, not limited to any place. Bethel is described as 'surely, the LORD is in this place' (Gen 28:16), where he also argues that it was essential in the diaspora/scattering to limit the exclusivity of the central temple (pp. 53-54).

³³ Eighty two percent of J is found in Genesis alone. This concentration might point to the possibility that J is only limited to Genesis; see Thomas C. Römer, "The Elusive Yahwist: A Short History of Research," 24, where he points to recent research by Christoph Levin, where his reconstruction reveals the figure of 82 percent. Konrad Schmid makes the point that 'J as a coherent redactional work can only be detected in the book of Genesis.' See Konrad Schmid, "The so-called Yahwist and the Literary Gap between Genesis and Exodus," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 29-50, esp. 30.

Yahwist also opposes the theology of cult-centralisation in Jerusalem as the only legitimate place of worship.³⁴

5.2.2. The Priestly Source (P)

It has been proposed that an exilic priestly redaction has been argued to have combined for the first time the Yahwistic (or non-priestly) sources into one continuous literary work stretching from the primeval history through the patriarchal narratives to the Moses-exodus narratives.³⁵ The main edition is referred to as P^G (*Priestergrundchrift*) and the supplements carry the abbreviation P^S.³⁶ The reasons for the exilic dating of P are as follows:³⁷ a) P presupposes the late-pre-exilic Deuteronomistic cult centralisation that YHWH can only be worshipped at the one place that he will choose;³⁸ b) a consequently (thoroughly) applied monotheism, that only finds its contemporary expression in Deutero-Isaiah;³⁹ c) a number of thematic and linguistic connections to the Deuteronomistic and exilic prophetic works of Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel; d) the universalistic theological outlook that views YHWH's

³⁴ Christoph Levin, "The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch," 230. Also Christoph Levin, "The Yahwist and the Redactional Link between Genesis and Exodus," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 131-141, esp. 132.

³⁵ Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 230.

³⁶ Recently the suggestion was brought forward that there are post-priestly (*nachpriesterschriftliche*) redactions in Genesis; see Peter Weimar, "Gen 37 – Eine vielschichtige literarische Komposition," *ZAW* 118, no. 4 (2006): 485-512.

³⁷ Hans-Christoph Schmitt differentiates between P^G and P^S, for P^G he suggests the Babylonian *golah* as origin, while P^S originates from Jerusalem; see Hans-Christoph Schmitt, *Arbeitsbuch zum Alten Testament*, 194-195.

³⁸ According to 2 Kings 22-23 (following Deuteronomy 12) King Josiah's reform centralised the cult so that the only legitimate sanctuary was in Jerusalem. For a further discussion, see Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 230, 246-247.

³⁹ For this and the other reasons for the exilic dating of P; see Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 230-237.

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involvement and salvation as universally inclusive and finally, e) the legislation of the priestly tabernacle in Exodus 25-29 and its relation to the building of the Second Temple in 515 BCE.⁴⁰

Christoph Levin goes further and sees the diaspora as the addressee of P. He understands the perspective adopted in P as being from outside the land and he suggests Jerusalem as the place of writing.⁴¹ This ties in with what Donald Redford suggested in 1970, on linguistic grounds; namely, that the Joseph story is exilic.⁴² One reason is that in the P texts in Genesis the patriarchs are labelled as *μyrg* (*gerim* – strangers, sojourners).⁴³ Walter Brueggemann also connects the idea of a land promised and the blessing of land to the exilic period of landlessness. This is a radical affirmation of the future specifically at the time when it was contradictory to the experience of the people.⁴⁴ At the same time, the divine blessing is not dependent on the possession of the land.

The exilic period provides the best hypothetical background for a priestly redaction.⁴⁵ So far the only evidence for a compilation of

⁴⁰ Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 236-237. For further reasons, see David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 136.

⁴¹ Christoph Levin, *Das Alte Testament*, 75.

⁴² Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 65, 251-253.

⁴³ Cf. Gen 17:8; 23:4; 28:4; 35:27; 36:7; 37:1; and in retrospective Exod 6:4. See Konrad Schmid, "The so-called Yahwist and the Literary Gap," 43.

⁴⁴ Walter Brueggemann, "The Kerygma of the Priestly Writer," *ZAW* 84, no. 4 (1972), esp. 408.

⁴⁵ One reason for the exilic setting for P is that it has its linguistic similarities to the exilic book of Ezekiel. However, some scholars reject an exilic dating of P based on comparative studies of P and Ezekiel; for example, Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1982); Menahem Haran, "Behind the Scenes of History: Determining the Date of the Priestly Source," *JBL* 100, no. 3 (1981): 321-333; Menahem Haran, "Ezekiel, P, and the Priestly School," *VT* 58, no. 2 (2008): 211-218. See also Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOTSup 358; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), esp. ch. 6. She suggests that Ezekiel

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priestly material into a bigger whole is found in the book of Ezra. The scribe Ezra is reported to be trained in the law of Moses (Ezra 7:6) and he initiated the return of Mosaic teaching from Babylon to the province of Yehud. Thus, it is not surprising that traditionally P, the exile and the mission of the priest-scribe Ezra are related. The work of Ezra is in that scenario related to the final redaction of the Pentateuch around 400 BCE.⁴⁶

At this stage of the research no further comments can be made about the possibility of an earlier arrival of Pentateuchal narratives from Babylon. The impending question is: How intrinsic to the experience of the earliest Judahite diaspora is the return motif, as it is used to date redactional layers? The shift in 'templeless' literature towards the return motif is either associated with hope centring on Jehoiachin's release from prison in 562 BCE or on the appearance of Cyrus in 550 BCE.⁴⁷ The question is whether the text can be dated according to this shift of emphasis or not. If an eschatological return is an intrinsic feature

both knew P and D but created a unique fusion of the theologies of P and D. The fusion is to update and respond to the failure of both theologies to prevent the apostasy that led to the exile. She concludes, 'though partial to P, Ezekiel nonetheless endeavoured to create a new theology that was neither independent of its sources nor a simple composite of them' (p. 117). See also, Risa Levitt Kohn, "A Prophet Like Moses? Rethinking Ezekiel's Relationship to the Torah," *ZAW* 114, no. 2 (2002): 236–254. A caution about Kohn's findings is expressed by Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Book Review of Risa Levitt Kohn's 'A New Heart and A New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah'," *JBL* 123, no. 2 (2004): 342–345.

⁴⁶ John Van Seters, *The Pentateuch: A Social-Science Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 178. See also Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 143–150; Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: a Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 80–83.

⁴⁷ Jill Middlemas, *The Templeless Age*, 93. Also Bradley C. Gregory, "The Postexilic Exile in Third Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1–3 in Light of Second Temple Hermeneutics," *JBL* 126, no. 3 (2007): 475–496, esp. 490–492.

of a diaspora community, then at least we can say that the text is not older than 722 BCE.⁴⁸

5.2.3. Deuteronomistic Supplements in Genesis

The late deuteronomistic supplements to P and the lack of a traceable influence of P on the deuteronomistic corpus indicates, in a reassessment of the traditional dating of the sources, that the redactional link between the two must be post-priestly (*nachpriesterschriftlich*).⁴⁹ Thus, at a later stage 'deuteronomistic' additions were inserted into the combined J-P narrative.⁵⁰ The two important themes are: firstly, the

⁴⁸ For a similar point see Konrad Schmid, "Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch," in *Abschied vom Jahwisten. Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (ed. Jan Christian Gertz, et al.; BZAW 315; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 83-118, esp. 111. For a discussion of P and the Babylonian diaspora, see Kenton L. Sparks, "Enuma Elish and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism," *JBL* 126, no. 4 (2007): 625-648.

⁴⁹ Eckart Otto, "Forschungen zum nachpriesterschriftlichen Pentateuch," *ThR* 67, no. 2 (2002): 125-155, esp. 127, also Hans-Christoph Schmitt, *Arbeitsbuch zum Alten Testament*, 201. Albert de Pury makes the point that the Deuteronomists knew the Jacob tradition well but also vehemently rejected it; see Albert de Pury, "The Jacob Story," 55. Similarly, this might account for the lack of Deuteronomistic ideas in Genesis. Konrad Schmid, citing a study by Lothar Perlitt, concludes, 'there are no traces of P ... in Deuteronomy.' See Konrad Schmid, "The Late Persian Formation of the Torah: Observations on Deuteronomy 34," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschits, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 237-251, esp. 238.

⁵⁰ Claus Westermann, in his commentaries on Genesis, never discusses the presence of any D source or supplements. He discusses J, E, P and the Redactor; see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36* (London: SPCK, 1986), 573-574. For an assessment of the (early post-exilic, p. 392) D supplements, see Erhard Blum, who notes that beside Gen 35:1-5 only small supplements were added; see Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vlyen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 362. For a detailed list of Blum's D supplements, see pp. 396-399. Similarly, Mark G. Brett notes that, 'there is no hint in Genesis of the ideology of dispossession that governs the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua. On the contrary, Abram builds an altar to Yahweh in the

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emphasis in Deuteronomy on obedience to YHWH's Torah; and secondly, the opposition to foreign influences on Israel (highlighted by the Canaanites).⁵¹ Then there is the question of the origin of the covenant theology in the Deuteronomistic School.⁵² Another criterion is the presence of deuteronomic language.⁵³ Carr is uncertain if the supplements should be considered deuteronomistic; he prefers to view them as 'semi-"Deuteronomistic" elements.'⁵⁴ Blenkinsopp also points to the general lack of intertextuality between Genesis and Deuteronomy.⁵⁵

same area as the sacred tree (12.7), and this is just the first of many cases where the religious practices of the Israelite ancestors flout the laws of Deuteronomy without so much as a cautionary remark from the editors.' See Mark G. Brett, *Genesis*, 51.

⁵¹ David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 157. On Deuteronomy and the original inhabitants of the land; see Cornelis Houtman, "Die ursprünglichen Bewohner des Landes Kanaan im Deuteronomium. Sinn und Absicht der Beschreibung ihrer Identität und ihres Charakters," *VT* 52, no. 1 (2001): 51-65. He also notes the portrayal of the Canaanites in Genesis which is very different from their portrayal in Deuteronomy (cf. pp. 63-64).

⁵² For a discussion of the Assyrian legal practice on covenant theology and its relation to Genesis 9, 15, and 17; see Hans-Christoph Schmitt, *Arbeitsbuch zum Alten Testament*, 200-204.

⁵³ For the problem of identifying deuteronomic language, see the summarising essay by Steven L. McKenzie, "Postscript: The Laws of Physics and Pan-Deuteronomism," in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 262-271.

⁵⁴ David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 165, also 161, 170-176. Similarly, Robert R. Wilson, "Who was the Deuteronomist? (Who was not the Deuteronomist?): Reflections on Pan-Deuteronomism," in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 67-82, esp. 81.

⁵⁵ Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomic Contribution to the Narrative in Genesis-Numbers: A Test Case," in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. Linda S. Schearing and Steven L.

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For this study it is enough to note that all negative references in Genesis to the Canaanites are thought to be late deuteronomistic supplements: for example, the curse of Canaan in Gen 9:25-27⁵⁶ and the statement that the sin of the Amorites 'is not yet complete' in Gen 15:16.⁵⁷ Römer also suggested a deuteronomistic pro-*golah* redaction of Genesis 15, where the 'deuteronomistic school' – analogous to Jer 43:2 and Jeremiah 44 – influenced the text in order to legitimize the Babylonian *golah* through the patriarch Abraham.⁵⁸

5.2.4. Genesis and Exodus

A recent challenge to the Documentary Hypothesis proposes that the Pentateuch comprises fragmented independent short and well-developed narrative cycles and law codes that were joined after the exile.⁵⁹

McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 84-115, esp. 93.

⁵⁶ David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 162-163. See also Jacques Vermeylen, "La 'table des nations' (Gen 10): Yaphet figure-t-il l'Empire perse?," *Transeu* 5 (1992): 113-132, esp. 113-119.

⁵⁷ David M. Carr argues that both Gen 14 and 15 carry Deuteronomistic themes, and he views Gen 14 as the pre-shadowing of the conquest and judgment on the Canaanites (the four kings of the alliance) by later generations of Israelites; see David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, 166. This view seems unviable for the primary reason that all the fighting takes place outside the land of Canaan. For a deuteronomistic identification, see Rolf Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991), 137; Moshe Anbar, "Genesis 15: A Conflation of Two Deuteronomistic Narratives," *JBL* 101, no. 1 (1982): 39-55 who argues that the whole chapter is a conflation of two Deuteronomistic narratives.

⁵⁸ Thomas C. Römer, "Genèse 15 et les tensions de la communauté juive post-exilique dans le cycle d'Abraham," 107-121. Similarly, Shemaryahu Talmon, "'400 Jahre' oder 'vier Generationen' (Gen 15, 13-15): Geschichtliche Zeitangaben oder literarische Motive?," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Erhard Blum, et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 13-25, esp. 22.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of this, see Thomas C. Römer, "The Elusive Yahwist: A Short History of Research," 24-27, or Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the*

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In the post-exilic period, the patriarchal narratives were joined to the Moses cycle, placing the competing memories of Israel's origins together.⁶⁰ Some of the arguments brought forward are the lack of reference to the patriarchal promise in Exodus 3-4,⁶¹ the fact that 'Hosea sets Jacob in opposition to Moses but does not unite them in the same history of salvation,'⁶² and the situation that only the post-exilic prophets, Second Isaiah and Ezekiel, show concrete knowledge of Noah (Isa 54:9 cf. Ezek 14:14), Abraham and Sarah (Isa 41:8, 51:2, cf. Ezek 33:24, Isa 29:22) and the Exodus tradition (Isa 43:16-21 cf. Ezek 20).⁶³ Then there are theological differences between the peaceful inclusion of the patriarchal narratives and the militant exodus narrative based on separation and elimination.⁶⁴ There is ongoing debate among scholars

Pentateuch (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), esp. chapter 9 'Reference Points for Reading the Pentateuch'.

⁶⁰ David M. Carr, "Genesis in Relation to the Moses Story: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2001), 273-295, esp. 294; Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 209; Eckart Otto, "Forschungen zum nachpriesterschriftlichen Pentateuch," 155; Thomas C. Römer, "La construction d'une 'vie de Moïse' dans la Bible hébraïque et chez quelques auteurs hellénistiques," in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography: l'historiographie biblique, ancienne et moderne* (ed. George J. Brooke and Thomas Römer; BETL 207; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 109-125.

⁶¹ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 193.

⁶² Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 194. The references are to Hos 12:3-5, 13 and 12:10, 14.

⁶³ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 194; E. Theodore Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*, 35-36.

⁶⁴ See Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 209; also his arguments in Jan Christian Gertz, "The Transition between the Book of Genesis and Exodus," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid; SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 73-87. For a detailed discussion, see also Konrad Schmid, "The so-called Yahwist and the Literary Gap," 29-50. A detailed argument can also be found in Konrad Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (Siphut, 3;

over the question of who was responsible for the joining of the patriarchal to the exodus tradition.⁶⁵ The main proposals are either the Priestly writer or the Yahwist.⁶⁶ This observation is important as it provides a basis for reading the stories of Genesis in their own right. More importantly, it disassociates Genesis theology from the differing theologies of Exodus and Deuteronomy. This prevents reading one theology into the other.

5.2.5. The Composite Document – The Pentateuch or Proto-Pentateuch

Römer summarises the emerging scholarly consensus of the Pentateuch as a composite document that includes different sections of theological schools:

There is also a considerable degree of agreement on an understanding of the Torah as a 'compromise document,' in which different narratives and legal collections were gathered together in an attempt to accommodate the different ideological points of view of the Priestly school on one hand and a lay group, which one may call the Deuteronomists, on the other hand.⁶⁷

The two important biblical personalities Moses and Ezra are both priests who also reflect deuteronomistic ideals. Moses is, naturally, the law giver but Ezra also holds the attitude that the revealed Torah is

Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010). For a detailed discussion, see also Konrad Schmid, "The so-called Yahwist and the Literary Gap," 29-50.

⁶⁵ The exodus tradition was already known to the prophets of the eighth century BCE, though unanimity about the 'founding myth' was not reached. See Mark G. Brett, "Israel's Indigenous Origins: Cultural Hybridity and the Formation of Israelite Ethnicity," *BibInt* 11, no. 3 (2003): 400-412, esp. 408-411.

⁶⁶ For a full discussion, see the articles in Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, eds., *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: SBL, 2006).

⁶⁷ Thomas C. Römer, "Moses outside the Torah and the Construction of a Diaspora Identity," *JHS* 8, no. 15 (2008): 2-12, esp. 2. [accessed 24.04.2018]. Online: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_92.pdf.

fundamental for good religious practice.⁶⁸ Each of them is presented as integrating both priestly and deuteronomistic ideals. The two are also linked in one way or the other to the diaspora, Moses as a member of the Egyptian diaspora who initiated the beginning of the return to the homeland and Ezra as a member of the Babylonian diaspora who was sent from Babylon to teach the ancestral religion to the Yehudites.

5.2.6. Conclusion of the Discussion of Source Criticism

There remains some disagreement over where this last redaction took place, either in and around Jerusalem or in the Babylonian *golah*.⁶⁹ This study will subsequently show that the characteristic mindset, both in terms of experience and theology, indicates that the book of Genesis was influenced in its recording and remembering by a diaspora mindset.⁷⁰ The distribution of these diaspora markers is not limited to either

⁶⁸ Thomas C. Römer, "Moses outside the Torah," 3.

⁶⁹ John Van Seters proposes that the Covenant Code in Exod 20:23-23:33 belongs to the Yahwist source (p. 4) and originated in the Babylonian exile. He detects a universal attitude that goes beyond the nationalistic deuteronomistic brotherhood and the religious obligation centres on the annual festivals as the primary identity provider. See John Van Seters, *A Law Book for the Diaspora: Revision in the Study of the Covenant Code* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 174. The annual festivals also feature prominently in Ezra-Nehemiah – the Feast of Booths (Ezra 4:3, Neh 8:4; 8:13-18), and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ezra 6:22). Texts from Elephantine witness to the celebration of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the book of Esther is all about Purim. William Johnstone also suggests that that the festivals in Exodus 1-24 are known in a P revision in the Persian period in light of the continuation of diaspora existence (without return); see William Johnstone, "The Revision of Festivals in Exodus 1-24 in the Persian Period and the Preservation of Jewish Identity in the Diaspora," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking; STAR 5; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 99-114.

⁷⁰ This study assumes a greater antiquity for the sources and does not hold that they were invented during the exile but were re-used and re-appreciated in that context. Richard J. Clifford made the insightful comment that 'authors during a disorienting crisis like the exile are much more likely to retrieve

of the two main sources in Genesis, J and P. Rather, it finds continual expression in both of them. Both sources are influenced by a diaspora mindset, J more than P but the passive and uncorrected preservation of these narratives by the priestly redactor points to his agreement with the overall presentation.

5.3. The *Golah* and Genesis

The shift in scholarly focus towards the exilic and Persian periods brought with it a renewed interpretative area – the interpretation of Genesis,⁷¹ or parts of it.⁷² This was either from the perspective of the situation in Yehud⁷³ or from the perspective of the Babylonian *golah* community.⁷⁴ A good example of an interpretation from the latter

venerable traditions than invent new stories.' See Richard J. Clifford, "Book Review of Andreas Schüle's 'Der Prolog der hebräischen Bibel: Der literatur- und theologiegeschichtliche Diskurs der Urgeschichte [Genesis 1-11]'," *Int* 62, no. 3 (2008): 320-322, esp. 322.

⁷¹ See the helpful commentaries by Clare Amos, *The Book of Genesis* and James McKeown, *Genesis*. Both commentaries interpret the book of Genesis from its historical perspective of the exile in Babylon – the Babylonian *golah*.

⁷² With P^G located in the Persian period (in Jerusalem) a new appreciation and interaction between the patriarchs and life in Yehud is vocalised - see, for example, Albert de Pury, "Situer le cycle de Jacob," 213-241; Albert de Pury, "Le tombeau des Abrahamides," 183-184; Albert de Pury, "The Jacob Story," 51-72. See also Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Abraham - A Judahite Prerogative," 49-66, who argues for Judahite origin based on the use of the Abraham tradition in the exilic prophetic literature, prayers and laments.

⁷³ Note especially the work of Mark G. Brett, who reads Genesis against the ethnocentrism of the Persian period, especially against a narrow 'holy seed' theology as expressed by Ezra and Nehemiah. See Mark G. Brett, *Genesis*, 1-23. Brett's reading is highly informative and well argued. Nevertheless, it cannot be certain that the reading is exclusively against the 'holy seed' conflict in Yehud. It is possible that a similar struggle may also be found in the ongoing conflict between inclusion and exclusion in the wider Babylonian *golah*.

⁷⁴ See, Alastair G. Hunter, "Father Abraham," 3-27; Thomas C. Römer, "Genèse 15 et les tensions de la communauté juive postexilique dans le cycle

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perspective, which attempts to address the Babylonian *golah* community's need, is put forward by Clare Amos:

As it developed, the story of Abraham acted as both reassurance and challenge to the Jewish community living in the Babylonian diaspora. It is not now a tale of fulfilment so much as one of promise. Abraham is an example of a person who is called by God to journey from Ur of the Chaldees (appropriate starting point if the story is directed towards those themselves living in Mesopotamia) to a land which he had been promised. His journey will not be problem-free, and he may not be able fully to possess the land to which he is journeying, but he will be bearing with him the threefold promise of God: a promise of progeny, a promise of relationship with God, and an eventual promise of land. So Abraham is being presented as an example for those [*sic*] were in Babylon to encourage them to return to their homeland and help remake their nation.⁷⁵

Amos' and similar interpretations stress the return theme both in the Babylonian diaspora and in the texts of Genesis. Yet this return theology is thus far only found in the Abraham cycle and potentially in Jacob's return from Paddam Aram or Isaac's return from Gerar and it is also in the scholarly reconstructed *golah* mindset. The observation that the return motif is not a continuous theme in Genesis and that Jacob only returns as a corpse to the land and all his children not at all (except 400 years later the bones of Joseph), indicates the need for a more balanced approach. Current scholarship does not go far enough in its appreciation

d'Abraham," 107-121; Robert P. Carroll, "Exile! What Exile?," 63; Niels Peter Lemche, *Prelude to Israel's Past*, 223-225; Thomas C. Römer, "Recherches actuelles sur le cycle d'Abraham," 179-211; Jean-Louis Ska, "Essai sur la nature et la signification du cycle d'Abraham," 153-177.

Then there is also the suggestion that the Hebrew Bible was written in order to justify the returnees' claim on the land against the non-exiled population (= Canaanites), see Niels Peter Lemche, *The Canaanites and Their Land: The Tradition of the Canaanites* (JSOTSup 110; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991). For an interpretation of the Pentateuch from a diasporic perspective, see Gerhard Langer, "Exil und Diaspora als Movers jüdischer Identität," 15-35.

⁷⁵ Clare Amos, *The Book of Genesis*, 144.

of the diasporic images of non-return and not-yet-return. This study proposes to read Genesis as diaspora-influenced narratives, which anticipate return in the future. Such a reading can help balance the understanding of both the interpretation of the Babylonian *golah* and the reading of Genesis.

5.3.1. Diaspora and Literary Production

This section analyses the arguments that exclude the *golah* from being a potential place of literary production. The argument about the literary production is always circumstantial and no concluding argument can be made at this stage about the place of literary production. It is possible that *golah* theology found its way into the text through returnees to Yehud but it is also possible that scrolls which were brought to Yehud already included *golah* theology.

Some doubt is repeatedly brought forward in relation to the possibility of literary production in exile. The argument centres on the question of the likelihood of deportees leaving the destroyed city of Jerusalem while carrying their traditions in the forms of scrolls.⁷⁶ One way to respond is to point to memorisation and a strong oral tradition among the exiles. Another response is to point out that the deportation did not occur immediately. This can be inferred from the speech of the Rabshakeh during Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701, where he says, 'until I come and take you' (2 Kgs 18:32), which points to the Assyrian tactic of not burdening the main army with a huge number of prisoners, specifically when the main military campaign was still ongoing. It is more likely that deportation begins once the main fighting has ended and sufficient preparations for such an expedition have been made.⁷⁷ The same is true in Abraham Malamat's historical reconstruc-

⁷⁶ See Philip R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'*, 41, also Diana Edelman, "Ethnicity and Early Israel," in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 25-55, esp. 33.

⁷⁷ John Van Seters concludes similarly, 'there is no reason why texts could not have been taken into exile among the elite at the time of the first exile. The

tion of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, in which he places the deportation at least a month after the defeat of the city.⁷⁸ This should have given the deportees sufficient time to prepare their belongings. It is also important to remember that the origin of the Babylonian *golah* (597 BCE) precedes the destruction of Jerusalem (587 BCE). No eyewitness accounts have survived to explain the nature and condition of the first deportation.⁷⁹ In relation to the 597 deportation, there is theoretically a possibility that the biblical material could have been packed and taken to Babylon. When Ezekiel re-enacts Judah's captivity he especially mentions the packing of luggage (Ezek 12:3-7). It cannot be excluded that that deportation was orderly and material could have been taken to Babylon.

Communication between Yehud and the *golah* continued throughout the exilic period. The books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah relate that letters and messengers travelled between Jerusalem and Babylon (cf. Jer 29:1; 51:59; Ezek 33:21; also Zech 6:10-11; Neh 1:2) and vice versa (Jer 29:25). Jeremiah 51:59-64 narrates the sending of scrolls containing oracles against Babylon via entrusted messengers. Joseph Naveh has published a jar handle with a Yehud seal that was found in the Shephelah but an

destruction of the Second Temple or Herod did not prevent many scrolls from being salvaged from Jerusalem and the temple, some even taken as booty to Rome.' See John Van Seters, "The Origins of the Hebrew Bible Part Two," 229.

⁷⁸ Abraham Malamat, "The Twilight of Judah: In the Egyptian-Babylonian Maelstrom," in *Congress Volume: Edinburgh 1974* (ed. G. W. Anderson; VTSup 28; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 123-145, esp. 133-134. See also Oded Lipschits who identifies a similar gap of four weeks between conquest and destruction of the city; see Oded Lipschits, "Judah, Jerusalem and the Temple 586-539 B.C.," *Transeu* 22 (2001): 129-142, esp. 136. Walter Mayer notes that before the temple in Susa was destroyed in 689 BCE, a census of the inventory, the archive and the population that was to be deported was made. The destruction of the temple was only the last and final act. See Walter Mayer, "Die Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels 587 v. Chr. im Kontext der Praxis von Heiligtumszerstörungen im antiken Vorderen Orient," in *Zerstörung des Jerusalemer Tempels* (ed. Johannes Hahn; WUNT 147; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 1-22, esp. 19.

⁷⁹ 2 Kgs 24:12-16 (similarly Jer 24:1) does not report any disruption, violence or destruction in relation to the deportees.

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identical seal was found in Babylon, indicating travel and commerce (or tax payments in natural goods) between the two places.⁸⁰

The question can also be asked as to whether the burned-down city and temple in Jerusalem, without priesthood and scribes, or the now destroyed non-provincial Yehudite former capital with no remaining Persian administrative scribes, is the more likely scenario for literary production.⁸¹ The answer to this is most likely neither: in Yehud, Bethel and Mizpah are the more likely places of indigenous literary production.⁸² If the original archives were in the Jerusalem temple, then they were moved out of Jerusalem to a new location, which undermines the argument that it is unlikely that literature was moved out of the burning city when scribes fled. Perhaps the sole concentration on Jerusalem as the literary centre for Judah needs to be re-thought. It also possible that archives were moved prior to the beginning of warfare to a secure location for safe keeping.

⁸⁰ Joseph Naveh, "Gleanings of Some Pottery Inscriptions," *IEJ* 46, no. 1-2 (1996): 44-51, esp. 45-47.

⁸¹ At least one scribe (Jeremai) is known in the late sixth century BCE in Yehud. The dating of this bullae is on palaeographical grounds, see Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second-Temple Period* (JSOTSup 291; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 46. See also E. Theodore Mullen, Jr. who argues for literary production in Jerusalem in this period; see Theodore Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*, 8-10. Robert P. Carroll cannot imagine Yehud to be the place where the long and complex scrolls of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Book of the Twelve could have been produced (before the Hellenistic Period); see Robert P. Carroll, "The Book of J: Intertextuality and Ideological Criticism," 231-232.

⁸² Nehemiah 7:4 offers a bleak literary evaluation of the ongoing struggle in the partially destroyed Jerusalem, 'the city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.' Two recent archaeological assessments argue for a severely de-populated Jerusalem in this period; see Wolfgang Zwickel, "Jerusalem und Samaria," 220 or Israel Finkelstein, "Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah," *JSOT* 32, no. 4 (2008): 501-520.

5.3.2. *The Golah and Literacy*

One grouping that can be identified from the archaeological findings from Mesopotamia and, at the same time, can shed light on literary activity among the exiled Judahites, are the scribes. The scribes form a 'professional social class of intellectuals, writers and officials.'⁸³ For the Babylonian period, the one occupation in particular that should be noted is that of the alphabet scribe (*sepīru*), because Judahite exiles were well-represented among this group of scribes.⁸⁴ Cuneiform documents were written by scribes of the urban Babylonian elite. Non-Babylonians, mostly Arameans, used instead the alphabet scribe who wrote in Aramaic. This is due to the rise of Aramaic as the *lingua franca* after 600 BCE,⁸⁵ which made the service of well-trained Judahite scribes in the royal administration a likely scenario. This professional exposure to the written traditions of Mesopotamia⁸⁶ placed the Judahite scribes in the unique position of acquiring literary skills necessary for the preservation of their ancient Hebrew writings and the composition of a 'corrective history' from the point of the Yahwistic religion, ultimately preserving the traditions and creating post-exilic Yahwism.⁸⁷

A. Kirk Grayson, in his study of the writing of Assyrian and Babylonian history, points out that in certain periods in their history there was a 'pronounced interest in the past.' One of the two instances mentioned with regard to Babylon was the period of foreign domination in the

⁸³ Leo G. Perdue, "Baruch among the Sages," in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen* (ed. John Goldingay; LHBOTS 459; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 260-290, esp. 260.

⁸⁴ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora*, 56. The Elephantine correspondence is also a witness to the competent professional Judean scribes. Porten lists for the period between 460 and 400 BCE 8 scribes, six of them Judeans, the two non-Judeans are only responsible for three out of 39 documents (cf. *TADAE* B:189).

⁸⁵ Stephen A. Kaufman, "Languages (Aramaic)," *ABD* 4:173-178, esp. 173.

⁸⁶ Leo Perdue, "Baruch among the Sages," 261.

⁸⁷ For the concept behind 'corrective history;' see Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 161.

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Hellenistic period, when the Greeks ruled over their empire.⁸⁸ The aim of the Babylonian scribes was to preserve a dying culture but also 'to promote a sense of pride' among their people in the achievements of their kings and their civilisation, as the Babylonians could trace their origins to the very beginning of creation.⁸⁹ However, in the Babylonian example, the writing and selection of material was done in its capital, Babylon, where there was still access to Babylonian historical works. A similar scenario could very well explain the origin of Genesis and its presentation of the past.

In relation to the exilic period, and especially the *golah*-redactions, Seitz observes the prominence of scribal families in close proximity of time to the prophet Jeremiah, both pre-597 (Jeremiah 26 and 36) and post-597 (Jeremiah 32; 37-40).⁹⁰ Timo Veijola similarly sees behind the DtrN redaction in Babylon a group of professional scribes who were able, because of their specialised training, to have access to some form of scribal archive and were able to produce a highly professional work.⁹¹ According to Erhard Gerstenberger, the inspiration for gathering and collecting sacred texts was adopted by the displaced Judahites and found its climax under Persian influence.⁹² This explains why exilic and diasporic themes play such a prominent role in the literature of the exilic and post-exilic (diasporic) period. It is likely that scribal groups in the Babylonian *golah* influenced some of the biblical writings.

The evidence of at least a reworking of the traditions of Ezekiel and Jeremiah in the Babylonian *golah* should indicate that the Babylonian *golah* as a location for literary production cannot be ruled out. The presence of diasporic concerns in Genesis would favour Babylon as a centre for literary production but the evidence is inconclusive. Overall,

⁸⁸ The other period is the time of Nebuchadnezzar I (circa 1125-1104 BCE) in which momentous religious developments took place.

⁸⁹ A. Kirk Grayson, "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: Assyria and Babylon," *Or* 49 (1980): 140-194, esp. 192-193.

⁹⁰ Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 229.

⁹¹ Timo Veijola, "The Deuteronomistic Roots of Judaism," 477.

⁹² Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit: 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), 321.

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it is possible that scrolls which included biblical materials were sent back and forth between the diaspora and Yehud. It also possible that *golah* returnees in Yehud were responsible for the inclusion of diaspora concerns, or even that non-*golah* scribes in Yehud appealed to readers with a diaspora mind-set and included their concerns. Overall, both Babylon and Yehud remain viable options for the literary production of these texts and neither can be excluded.

5.3.3. On the Importance of Exile and Diaspora as an Experience in Genesis

Every major and minor character in Genesis experiences dislocation. This uprooted experience is not only the result of a forced traumatic exile but also includes voluntary exilic movements. The only main characters who experience a traumatic and forced ban are Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:24 is the only verse with an implicit amount of force, 'He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.' Cain, after hearing his punishment for the murder of his brother, left without the need of further force (Gen 4:16). Jacob had to flee from his brother and yet at the same time the biblical account stresses that the purpose of Jacob's departure was for the survival of the identity of the family. This was achieved by the endogamous marriage with Abraham's kin. The sale of Joseph to Egypt, as traumatic as it must have been for him, only receives a matter-of-fact mention. Joseph is completely silent throughout the whole incident and the description does not use words of force like binding, violence or imprisonment. It is only recorded that Midianite traders pull him out of the pit and then sell him to the Ishmaelites, who take him to Egypt (Gen 37:27). Language of trauma and longing for return are surprisingly absent from the narratives in Genesis. Joseph names his first born son Manasseh, because God had made him forget his hardship and even his father's house (Gen 41:51). The experience of displacement did not

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result in expressions of exilic dislocation and hopelessness (as found in Lamentations or Psalm 137) in the text of Genesis.⁹³

McCoskey, in her summary of the approaches of diaspora scholars to the biblical tradition, points out that these approaches have focused mainly on texts that address the diaspora condition but often allegorically.⁹⁴ These texts are: Esther, Tobit, Judith, the story of Susanna, 2 Maccabees, Testament of Abraham, Testament of Job and Wisdom of Solomon. It seems striking that a diasporic approach was not applied to the book of Genesis, which from the very beginning pairs human existence with exile from the paradise and lays the claim that human existence is theologically always in a state of exile and in exile from the physical presence of God.⁹⁵ Or could it be said that theologically, the human condition is always diasporic? Augustine of Hippo implied this, with his analogy of the simultaneous citizenship of two cities (the City of Man and the City of God) and the ongoing need to balance their conflicting interests.⁹⁶ The story of the tower of Babel highlights the exile/scattering of people and people groups from a common centre and thus from a peaceful unifying location. There is no war before the scattering of the people and the territorial claims that go with human settlement. The patriarchal narratives reflect the exilic experiences of forced dislocation but also migration on a 'voluntary' basis.

'Voluntary' exile and migration is the predominant pattern of relocation in the book of Genesis. 'Voluntary' exile is here understood as a reference to voluntarily removing oneself from a physical danger that threatens one's life. It does not cover migration due to natural catastrophes like famine (Abraham, Jacob and his sons) or judicial punishment,

⁹³ See Michael Seidel, *Exile and the Narrative Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) for a discussion on exilic language in contemporary narratives.

⁹⁴ Denise McCoskey, "Diaspora in the Reading of Jewish History, Identity, and Difference," 399.

⁹⁵ See I. M. Duguid, "Exile." *NDBT*:475-478.

⁹⁶ Augustine of Hippo started his reflection about the human condition after the earthshattering events of August 24, 410 AD, after Rome, the capital of the undefeated Roman Empire was sacked by the Visigoths.

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as in the case of Cain. In the primeval history this kind of voluntary exile can only be applied to Noah, who sought refuge in the ark from the consequences of the impending judgment, thus establishing the precedent of a salvific voluntary exile. In the patriarchal narratives only Jacob's flight from Esau's wrath fits the characteristic of a voluntary exile, as he removes himself because of the threat to his life.⁹⁷

The primeval history establishes that the whole earth is created for human settlement and does not assign a certain territory to any nation. YHWH states that:

Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (Gen 28:14)

It is clear that Gen 28:14 does not use imperial language to promise a territory. Rather, a kinship with every family unit *abroad* indicates the non-oppressive relationship between Jacob's descendants and the rest of humanity. This lack of salvific attributes or divine creation of culture and civilisation, human social order and world order is more significant in light of the fact that all Akkadian and Sumerian creation accounts focus on validating the political reality of its time.⁹⁸ The only historical reality that would explain the lack of divine endorsement of any kind of social organisation and structure in Genesis and that would ensure the spread of the rule of law and civilisation is minority existence under foreign occupation, either in the diaspora or in Yehud.

Diasporas are fluid communities that are not limited by a home territory and are dispersed to a variety of places. The historical image of 'the wandering Jew' is another image that highlights this feature of the Jewish diasporic existence, which finds its literary equivalent in the nomadic migration of the patriarchal family. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

⁹⁷ A case of non-voluntary exile is that of Joseph, who is removed by force from his homeland.

⁹⁸ Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (CBQMS 26; Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 98.

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were aliens and sojourners in the Promised Land and the only land they ever possessed was a burial ground (Gen 23:19; 25:9; 49:31; 50:13) and a small piece of land Jacob bought near the city of Shechem (Gen 33:19), which was uninhabitable because of the atrocity of Jacob's sons. Bethel never becomes home; the sojourning of Jacob/Israel continues and is re-emphasized in the narratives (cf. Gen 35:21; 35:27; 37:1). The non-possession of land, paired with the nomadic image of the patriarchs, who repeatedly leave the homeland, point more to a diasporic influence that validates the diaspora existence beyond the homeland.⁹⁹

The book of Genesis in its final form does not contain a consistent theology of exile, especially in relation to exile as a result of divine punishment. What seems to be missing in Genesis' exilic references is any relation to the deuteronomic exilic ideology in which sin leads to exile and repentance leads to restoration.¹⁰⁰ In this regard the following stories have relevance: the fall of humanity (without any chance of restoration or any hint of repentance of Adam and Eve - Gen 3:22-24); the flood (no evidence on Noah's part that the destruction of humanity affected his theologizing about the consequences of sin for the future generations);¹⁰¹ the future inheritance of the land in the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 15:13-16 (where exile and slavery are not linked to transgression); and Jacob's cheating his brother to receive his blessing or taking the matter into his own hands instead of waiting for YHWH to

⁹⁹ An interesting line of further inquiry would be to investigate whether such a diaspora validation could only arise in the diaspora, or whether it were possible that a community in Yehud may also have held such a diaspora-inclusive view of existence. Increasingly in anthropological/sociological research, the question of the relationship between the homeland community and the diaspora is being investigated.

¹⁰⁰ The possibility must be acknowledged that repentance is a missing element in some narratives because otherwise, a theologically awkward situation would arise. Could Adam and Eve simply repent and return to Eden?

¹⁰¹ Nehemiah and Ezra both show this theologizing capacity in examining the 'fallen' state of disobedience. This is famously expressed in Nehemiah's prayer of mercy on behalf of the exiled nation and Jerusalem in Neh 1:4-11, and similarly, in Ezra 9, where the warning of overstepping the boundaries is related to the future well-being of the community.

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fulfil the promise to Rebekah in Gen 25:23. There is no indication, by Jacob's action in Haran or on his return, of his ability to see himself as having committed any wrong.

The closest reference to this kind of theology in Genesis is found in the Joseph novella, in Judah's reflection in Gen 44:16-34. Here Judah understands his previous sinful action as directly resulting in the imprisonment of his father's most beloved son, Benjamin. Judah is troubled about the agony and the heartbreak Benjamin's situation will bring to his aging father. Realising in the incident of the stolen cup that the brothers are innocent, Judah states to Joseph, 'God has found out the guilt of your servants' (Gen 44:16). The situation of the brothers' guilt is unfortunately not resolved; instead, in the narrative Joseph immediately reveals his true identity. The issue surfaces again, after the death and burial of Jacob, when the brothers send a messenger to Joseph, begging in the name of their dead father, 'please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you' (Gen 50:17). One of the differences in this 'deuteronomic' sin-repentance incident is that the sinning is not done against the deity but rather against other humans.¹⁰² In Deuteronomy, exile is the result of breaking YHWH's covenant, especially in relation to the religious cultic regulations (cf. the assessment in the Deuteronomistic History of Manasseh in 2 Kgs 21:1-18).

A theoretical learning outcome of the exile could be to deal in a meaningful manner with the question of guilt. Genesis preserves a not-yet internalised self-reflective theology of the nation's guilt. One could, of course, say that the patriarchal narratives in their literary chronological order predate the Mosaic covenant with its regulations. Thus, a transgression of not yet revealed cultic regulations cannot be considered as a reason for the exile; this is especially true in light of the non-exclusive Yahwistic monotheism of the patriarchs.¹⁰³ In light of

¹⁰² In Genesis, sin leads to death in three cases: humanity in the flood; the people of Sodom and Gomorrah; and Lot's wife in the same incident.

¹⁰³ This point is made mainly in relation to the non-exclusive naming of the deity with its Mosaic revealed name YHWH, though Abraham is said to have kept all the commandments and laws (Gen 26:5).

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theologizing in the late exilic period, where cultic non-conformity was understood to be the main reason for the exile, a possible solution is to understand deuteronomistic exilic reflection as a later intellectual development in the course of the exile. The internalisation of guilt did not originate among the members of the first exiles but is a development that historically might very well be connected to the third generation of exiles.¹⁰⁴ The third generation may have questioned the guilt not of their fathers but of their grandfathers. The notion of the internalisation of one's guilt followed by a response of repentance, is the desirable outcome of a crisis but not even in the exile-located book of Ezekiel or the reporting of the internal struggle inside the deportee community in Jeremiah (Jer 29:15-32) are there hints that could indicate an internalisation of the sin-guilt-exile paradigm. Rather, the opposite emerges from Jeremiah's communication with Shemaiah in Babylon, who complained about Jeremiah's prediction of a long exile (Jer 29:28) - an assessment he obviously did not share. Therefore, the theologizing

¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the first generation of the exodus also lacks this national and religious self-reflecting attitude that could have prevented their sojourn in the wilderness. Indeed, national, critical self-reflection does not seem to be a very widespread phenomenon among the nations of the 21st century. There are no clear examples in which national mistakes in a recent conflict have led to immediate acknowledgement of guilt – especially by those who are responsible. West-Germany comes to mind as a nation that openly acknowledges and learns from its national guilt but only in relation to the Nazi war crime. And this process was not started by the war generation, or their children, but began mainly with their great grandchildren in the 1970s. German politics also distinguishes between the Nazi war crimes and the genocide of the Herero people in the former German colony Namibia in 1904. So far Germany has not taken full responsibility and has not apologised for that genocide.

See also Dalit Rom-Shiloni's discussion on the exilic Psalm 44, which she describes as expressing, 'not only a complaint but a bitterly painful protest against God' for the exile, a view that differs from the orthodox-deuteronomistic reflection of human sinfulness as the cause of the exile; see Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Psalm 44: The Powers of Protest," *CBQ* 70, no. 4 (2008): 683-698, esp. 684.

regarding the cause of the exile could certainly be located in the subsequent generations.

5.3.4. Genesis and ANE Historiographies

The observation of similarity between historiographies in the Hebrew Bible and historiographies in the ANE and in Greek literature is a fruitful field of enquiry. The similarity is usually either based on a single comparable motif (the flood) or on the general etiological aim of explaining the origin of the nation (a national history). Genesis narrates the earliest history of YHWH's dealing with what will become the nation Israel and so it features prominently in the discussions regarding similarity to ANE historiographical works. This section investigates the relation between historiography and Genesis, especially in light of the diaspora in Babylon.

The primeval history in Genesis 1-11 draws on or is composed within the context of ancient Mesopotamian tradition.¹⁰⁵ There are similarities between the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 and the Babylonian *Enûma Elish* (also *The Atrahasis Epic*),¹⁰⁶ the Garden of Eden and the Sumerian Flood Story, the story of the deluge in Genesis 6 and the Sumerian and Akkadian *Gilgamesh Epic*. The *Old Babylonian King List* gives evidence of the long lives of the antediluvian age as found in Genesis 5. Russel E. Gmirkin also argues that the Nimrod and the Tower of Babel stories in Genesis 10-11 draw on Mesopotamian sources.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Discussions on this topic are numerous and widespread - see the relevant commentaries on Genesis. For a connection between the Babylonian exile and Genesis, see J. Maxwell Miller, "In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," *JBL* 91, no. 3 (1972): 289-304, who sees evidence in the priestly stratum in Genesis 1-11 that it was influenced by the Babylonian exile.

¹⁰⁶ For an assessment of the differences between the Atrahasis Epic and Genesis 2, see Joshua A. Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18-26.

¹⁰⁷ Russell E. Gmirkin, *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (LHBOTS 433/CIS 15; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 114-132.

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Recently, suggestions have been put forward to link biblical historiography with Greek histories.¹⁰⁸ This is based on the observation that only late national histories (Berossus in Babylon; Manetho in Egypt) are known from Mesopotamia and Egypt.¹⁰⁹ But no national history from before the Hellenistic period is known in total or in fragments. Yet it seems likely, as Van Seters suggests, that underneath the Hellenistic developments lie older ANE influences.¹¹⁰ The other question that needs to be asked is whether the Pentateuch could at any stage be classified as national historiography.¹¹¹ A biblical example for a national history is found in the books of Chronicles and not the Pentateuch. 1 Chronicles 1-9 swiftly covers the history from Adam to King David, then dwells on David and Solomon (1 Chronicles 10-2 Chronicles 9), followed by the kings of Judah (2 Chronicles 10-36).¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Jan-Wim Wesselius, for example, recently discusses the dependence of the Primary History (Genesis – 2 Kings) on the work of the Greek Historian Herodotus (ca. 485-ca 425 BCE); see Jan-Wim Wesselius, "Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible," *SJOT* 13, no. 1 (1999): 24-77, esp. 38-64. Also John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983).

¹⁰⁹ Gary N. Knoppers, "Greek Historiography and the Chronicler's History: a Reexamination," *JBL* 122, no. 4 (2003): 627-650, esp. 628.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of John Van Seters' position and further literature; see Hans M. Barstad, "Is the Hebrew Bible a Hellenistic Book? Or: Niels Peter Lemche, Herodotus, and the Persians," *Transeu* 23 (2002): 129-151, esp. 134-135.

¹¹¹ The Enneateuch (Genesis to Kings) would qualify to be the national history. For a critical assessment of it, see Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, 3-9.

¹¹² Similarly, John Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 48; Sara Japhet, "Periodization: Between History and Ideology. The Neo-Babylonian Period in Biblical Historiography," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 75-89, esp. 82. See also her stimulating study and observation that Chronicles skips the exodus and settlement period; see Sara Japhet, "Conquest and Settlement in Chronicles," in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), repr. from *JBL* 98 (1979).

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So far the notion that fragmentary similarities should be enough to indicate a literal dependency of the Pentateuch on Hellenistic histories remains unconvincing. Such a view does not take into account the rich cross-fertilisation between Greece and Persia prior to the rise of these Hellenistic writings. It is unfortunate that not more Persian and Greek texts have survived to the present day, as the fragmentary evidence makes the establishment of the writing of national histories an incomplete exercise.¹¹³ It generally seems a more fruitful endeavour to focus attention in the quest for similarities on culturally and linguistically similar cultures in the ANE rather than on a Hellenistic setting. The *golah's* presence in Mesopotamia makes it a potential contact point between Mesopotamian myth and the Yahwistic reworking known from Genesis 1-11.¹¹⁴

One recent example of linking the writing of national histories to the Hellenistic period is found in Gmirkin, who collected evidence that links these Near Eastern traditions with archives in Babylon, where the *Babyloniaca* of the Babylonian priest Berossus was written in 290 BCE. He links Berossus' subsequent migration to the Ptolemaic Aegean island of Cos to the increased interchange of ideas between Cos and Alexandria under Ptolemy I and II. The *Babyloniaca* was published in 278 BCE in Greek and was later available in the library in Alexandria. He theorises a hypothetical connection between the library in Alexandria, the *Babyloniaca* and the Jewish diaspora community in Alexandria. He suggests that in Alexandria Jewish scholars subsequently accessed and modelled the composition of the entire Pentateuch on the

¹¹³ Stuart D. Beeson points out that historiography, 'is the structured narration, principally in written form ... of past events in and for the author's present.' See Stuart D. Beeson, "Historiography Ancient and Modern: Fact and Fiction," in *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography: l'historiographie biblique, ancienne et moderne* (ed. George J. Brooke and Thomas Römer; BETL 207; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 3-11, esp. 3.

¹¹⁴ The critical assessment of Babylonian religion in the primeval history is widely attested; the prime examples are the creation accounts (Gen 1:1-2.4), the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9) with its criticism of Babylonian temple-towers, and the flood narratives (Gen 6:5-8.22); see for example Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 159-166.

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Babyloniaca.¹¹⁵ Gmirkin rejects the idea that the Mesopotamian legends reached Israel via Canaan, based on the observation that there is no trace of Canaanite legends in Genesis 1-11. He suggests that Genesis 1-11 draws 'directly on unfiltered Mesopotamian materials.'¹¹⁶ Gmirkin sees his suggestion as useful for explaining how Genesis 1-11 was able to draw on Mesopotamian cuneiform sources.¹¹⁷

In response to Gmirkin's suggestion that Genesis is modelled on the Greek translation of the *Babyloniaca* (278 BCE), rather than influenced by the older sources that Berossus used.¹¹⁸ The similarities are not as significant as Gmirkin suggests. First, no version of Berossus' *Babyloniaca* has survived and there are only citations that mainly go back to a first century abridgement by Alexander Polyhistor.¹¹⁹ Therefore, Grayson's assessment still remains valid: that no concept of the overall nature of the *Babyloniaca* can be gained.¹²⁰ The following differences between the two works must be pointed out: the *Babyloniaca* starts with a prologue explaining Babylon and its role as the foundation of civilisation (A1:section 1-5), followed by a mystical, yet allegorical creation 'account' based on *Enûma Elish* (A2:1-4) and then a zodiacal discussion of the yearly cycle and the moon (A3:1 and A4:1). Book Two contains a list of kings that reigned before the flood (B1:1-11), followed by a flood account where the ship also lands in Armenia (B2:1-4) and then the list of sages (B3:1) and dynasties after the flood (B4:1-10). The *Babyloniaca* swiftly moves into a lengthy presentation of the ancestral kings and their reigns, something completely absent from the Primeval

¹¹⁵ Russel E. Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 1.

¹¹⁶ Russel E. Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 90-91. For a caution on the exclusive reliance on Mesopotamian sources, see J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 23-24.

¹¹⁷ Russel E. Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 246.

¹¹⁸ Russel E. Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 91.

¹¹⁹ For a treatment of the surviving sections, see Stanley Mayer Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu, Calif.: Undena Publication, 1978), 10-11.

¹²⁰ See A. Kirk Grayson, "Histories and Historians," 149.

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History. Overall, Genesis 1-11 is quite different in its fundamental outline from the preserved and reconstructed texts of the *Babyloniaca*.

An alternative is that Judahite scribes could have naturally become familiar with Babylonian historical writings in the Babylonian diaspora. Berossus' *Babyloniaca* is based on other Babylonian sources and most probably on similar Babylonian histories. These were either known in their literary form in Akkadian or in Aramaic or in a popular oral form from the market places of Babylon. The Babylonian *Enûma Elish* was the religious text for the cult of Marduk in Babylon. It states that the patron deity of Babylon, Marduk, was promoted over the rest of the gods.¹²¹ W. G. Lambert concludes his research into the Babylonian background of Genesis by noting that the *Enûma Elish* is not a standard Babylonian or Sumerian cosmology but 'sectarian and aberrant.'¹²² In doing so he reinforces the Babylonian background over and against a wider Mesopotamian influence. Genesis 1-2 is similar to the *Enûma Elish* but not to the degree of showing direct literary dependence.¹²³ The Judahite scribal community subsequently modelled the retelling of their ancestral primeval history on a Babylonian format and produced a 'corrective history' in line with their Yahwistic convictions.¹²⁴ It seems unlikely that Genesis 1-11 has direct literary dependence on a Babylonian form but rather, that it is modelled on a general format of re-telling history. The diaspora community did not invent these accounts but used Judahite material and simply based the presentation on Babylonian literary models.

ANE historiography is similar in some respects to the biblical writings but not in others. Van Seters attempts to chart the similarities between ANE historiographies and the Enneateuch and yet in relation to the

¹²¹ Russel Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 95.

¹²² W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11* (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; SBTS 4; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 96-113, esp. 100.

¹²³ Russel E. Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 92. Also Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 140.

¹²⁴ For this concept, see Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 161.

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Pentateuch he fails to appreciate the fundamental differences among these writings. The historiographical writings from Egypt, from the Hittites and from the nations of Mesopotamia have the singular purpose of establishing the prime focus of history. For these nations, 'the king, his dynasty, or even kingship itself was the focus'¹²⁵ when writing a national history. The same is true for Hellanicus' *Phoronis* (only known in fragments): it is named after Phoroneus, to whom the indigenous population of Greece traced their origin.¹²⁶ In the ANE, kingship is the dominant force in the sacred and religious realm, with the oriental ruler mediating between the divine and human spheres.¹²⁷ A biblical example of this tendency to establish the political, social and religious order through historiographical works can be found in the work of the Chronicler. The Chronicler directly connects the genealogies of the sons of Jacob to the royal line of David, omitting the exile in Egypt, the exodus, the periods of wanderings in the wilderness, the conquest and the settlement of Canaan. Japhet examines the Chronicler's historiographic aim of writing a national history that establishes the 'natural order' of society well. Monarchy is the natural order adopted by every nation. The kings (especially King David and Solomon) are guarantors of a good social order, as seen in the geographical expansion, the economic prosperity and the right worship (they initiated and built the temple). They are presented as the model of true monarchy.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ John Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 354-355.

¹²⁶ John Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 22.

¹²⁷ Gary N. Knoppers rightfully summarizes the uniqueness of the biblical revelation when he writes, 'among the civilizations of the ancient Near East, kingship is the typical polity for both divine and human realms. In placing a series of major constraints upon the powers of kingship, the deuteronomic law of the king is highly unusual. The powers of the monarchy, so dominant in the civilizations of the ancient Near East, are greatly circumscribed in Dtn 17,14-20. The belief in sacral kingship, prevalent at Ugarit, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, that a king mediates between the divine and human spheres, is absent from Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy the relationship between God and people is primary;' see Gary N. Knoppers, "The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomistic Law of the King," *ZAW* 108, no. 3 (1996): 329-346, esp. 329.

¹²⁸ Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 163.

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Apart from the similarities, it must also be noted that there seems to be a fundamental difference between these writings and their apologetic aim of linking their king, nation and city with the origin of humankind. The difference with regard to the Pentateuch is that it does not begin with a national history but rather, with the creation of the world and the insistence that the earth is made for global habitation. As to the whole Pentateuch, it can be argued that statehood is never achieved. The table of the nations continues to stress the relationship between different people groups, and in the case of Israel's ancestor, Shem, emphasis is on the shared ancestral relationship with Elam, Asshur and Aram, as opposed to Shinar (Babylon) and the descendants of Ham (Canaan and Egypt). The patriarchs move to the land but never inherit it. In the Pentateuch there is no nation Israel (only Jacob as Israel and the loose tribal federation of Israel), no Jerusalem (only the cryptic reference to Salem),¹²⁹ no temple (only a portable sanctuary), no

¹²⁹ Klaus Baltzer points out that the relationship between the patriarchs and Jerusalem is reflected here as it is possible to live in exile and cling to the promises of descendants, blessing and even a future inheritance in the land but Jerusalem is not needed for it. See Klaus Baltzer, "Jerusalem in den Erzväter-Geschichten der Genesis?," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Erhard Blum, et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 3-12, esp. 11.

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location of a temple (only the reference that its location will be chosen in the future)¹³⁰ and no royal house (only foreign kings).¹³¹

Similarities between the post-exilic historiographic work of Chronicles and that of Genesis are marked.¹³² There is a similarity in the treatment and importance of foreign rulers that breaks with the expectations to regard them as tyrants and enemies.¹³³ Since Isaiah's endorsement of Cyrus (Isa 44:28; 45:1, 13),¹³⁴ all Persian kings are viewed positively as benefactors who bring about Israel's salvation.¹³⁵ There is a general

¹³⁰ See Yairah Amit, "Epoch and Genre: The Sixth Century and the Growth of Hidden Polemics," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 135-151, esp. 145, where the following point is made: 'the legislator in the book of Deuteronomy was clearly interested above all in the centralization of worship, leaving Jerusalem as an option. He therefore used very generalised wording, "the place that the Lord your God shall choose," which indicates nowhere in particular. By only implying that this phrase referred to Jerusalem, he left open other interpretations in accordance with changing trends and historical circumstances.'

¹³¹ The first references to the establishment of a monarchy are found in Deut 17:14-20 (the possibility that the people might choose a king for themselves in the future) and in Deut 28:36 (the covenantal curse with the exile of the king).

¹³² Sara Japhet reminds us that, 'the works that are commonly identified as 'postexilic historiography' were not written under the immediate impact of destruction and exile, nor as a direct response to them. These works were composed between the fifth (or fourth) and the third centuries BCE and the destruction and exile are not their principal concern.' See Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 146.

¹³³ See Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 155 and the literature cited there.

¹³⁴ A similar point is made by Josef Wiesehöfer, who attests that many studies have found that the majority of the ruling class of defeated nations, with Egypt as the exception, viewed the Persian king not as oppressor but as guarantor for political stability, social order, economic prosperity and ultimately as guarantor of their own influence. See Josef Wiesehöfer, *Das antike Persien: von 550 v.Chr. bis 650 n.Chr* (Düsseldorf: Albatros, 2005), 93-94.

¹³⁵ Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 155.

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positive assessment of foreign rulers, even their moral superiority and their role as benefactor stands in contrast to later biblical assessments (Deut 17:15). Japhet's assessment of the presentation of foreign kings in Ezra-Nehemiah is directly transferable to Genesis. The foreign rulers 'are presented as inspired by the Lord's spirit, and their acts are seen as the way in which the Lord of Israel chose to extend his love to his people.'¹³⁶ They respond immediately to divine prompting, be it plagues or barrenness, and all act graciously towards the patriarchs. The action by Abimelech of Gerar (also known as Abimelech the Philistine) twice protected the purity of the matriarchs and thus the line of the chosen seed. All foreign kings in Genesis provide shelter and refuge during the famine. Their lands are truly lands of blessing as the fortunes of the patriarchs increase during their time there.

The assessment is generally positive about the influence of foreign rulers. One partial exception is Genesis 14, where a military conflict between neighbouring royal houses affects Abraham only indirectly as he sets out to rescue his nephew Lot. At the same time, Genesis 14 contrasts two foreign rulers, the negative, unnamed king of Sodom, with the positive, named Melchizedek. In Genesis 14, the victorious foreign imperial kings are only responding to a rebellion, which has started to undermine the social and political order of some of the minor kingdoms in the Transjordan but, as Abraham and his 318 men defeat the alliance of foreign kings, their threat is downplayed. The next and exceptional foreign ruler encountered is Abimelech of Gerar in Genesis 20. Abraham and Sarah migrate to Gerar, lie to the king about their marital relationship and endanger the king and his people. Abimelech is the first foreign ruler and only the second person in the patriarchal narrative with whom YHWH converses directly.¹³⁷ Abimelech's moral integrity is highlighted by the apparent contrast with the cowardly and self-centred Abraham, who was trying to save himself and who

¹³⁶ Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 154.

¹³⁷ This was pointed out by Anselm C. Hagedorn, "The Absent Presence: Cultural Responses to Persian Presence in the Eastern Mediterranean," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 39-66.

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'sacrifices' his wife, while Abimelech is motivated by genuine care for his family, his servants and his people. Abimelech is portrayed as a person of integrity, while Abraham even tries to justify his lie with the comment about Sarah technically being his sister. Furthermore, God himself endorses Abimelech's integrity in his speech to the foreign king as the reason for him having been spared and having been warned. The episode also contains the warning not to associate foreign rulers and their lands too easily with evil, ungodly and corrupt practices – as summarized in the hypocritical cry of Abraham, 'there is no fear of God at all in this place' (Gen 20:11).¹³⁸

The uniqueness of the Pentateuch's presentation of not living in one's home country can easily be overlooked, yet it is the fundamental theme that begins in Eden, runs through Canaan and ends with the patriarchs living abroad. The focus is not on being *in* the land, rather Moses' death is *outside* the land,¹³⁹ the patriarchs do not settle in the land, the final location of the temple in the land is not-yet-chosen (Deut 12:11), then there is the eschatological view of a future settlement in the land as well as the Mosaic sanctification for settling permanently outside the promised land (the 2 ½ half tribes east of the Jordan). The fundamental question in relation to Genesis is why is this image of the outsider chosen and maintained throughout the book?¹⁴⁰ They are outsiders not only when living abroad but also when living in their own homeland. Christophe Nihan comments on suggestions regarding ending the Torah at Deuteronomy 34 (and not with the conquest in the book of Joshua) with Moses' death *outside* the land and views it as being a deliberate concession to the well-established Judahite diaspora.¹⁴¹ It does not

¹³⁸ For a discussion of inter-people relationship conflicts in Genesis, see 6.3.7 of this study.

¹³⁹ Thomas C. Römer, "Moses outside the Torah," 3-4.

¹⁴⁰ See Nili Wazana's article that suggests the answer lies in a perception of origin in historical rather than mystical times, see Nili Wazana, "Natives, Immigrants and the Biblical Perception of Origins in Historical Times," *TA* 32, no. 2 (2005): 220-244.

¹⁴¹ Christophe Nihan, "The Torah between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua," in *The Pentateuch as Torah* (ed. Gary N.

seem to be right to set the diaspora in opposition to Yehud. In the Pentateuch the view is maintained that it is possible to reside outside the land, as one form of existence, and that this is not necessarily an inferior form.¹⁴² Konrad Schmid argues that in relation to P, and thus in relation to the final redaction of the Pentateuch, the editor does not envision an overthrow of the Persian Empire. The end of history is reached with the Persian Empire¹⁴³ and this cements the status quo in which Judeans live both in the land and outside it. To a degree, this breaks the paradigm of one people – one land, in which every nation has a land in which its people live which is known to belong primarily to them.¹⁴⁴

5.4. Diaspora Influence in Genesis

One assumption guiding this investigation is that the Babylonian *golah* community witnessed a tremendous amount of religious re-formulation of the ancestral faith in order to make better sense of their exile and diaspora experience.¹⁴⁵ The books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, especially in

Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 187-223, esp. 189-190. See also Christoph Levin, "Das Alte Testament auf dem Weg zu seiner Theologie," 141 who concludes that the Yahwist incorporated his redactional changes with the aim to address his message to the Judeans in the dispersion. For a recent argument against these views, see Ludwig Schmidt, "Die Priesterschrift - kein Ende am Sinai," ZAW 120, no. 4 (2008): 481-500.

¹⁴² In this study I refer to this view as a diaspora view but do not claim that it only could have originated in the diaspora.

¹⁴³ Konrad Schmid, "Judean Identity and Ecumenicity: The Political Theology of the Priestly Document," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 3-26.

¹⁴⁴ Steven Grosby is surely right when he points out that the conjoining of the name Israel to refer both to a land and a people indicates 'the shared beliefs constitutive of nationality, ancient and modern: a people has its land and a land has its people.' See Steven Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality*, 24.

¹⁴⁵ Jill Middlemas summarises the new theological insights arising out of the ruins of the exile as follows: 'first formulations of exclusive monotheism; the

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their redactional layers, are a witness to the process and re-formulation of theological presuppositions. One very good example is the shift from the idea of exile as the annihilation of the exiled population to the idea of exile in which the development of a restoration theology thrives.¹⁴⁶ Another would be that the presence of YHWH is not limited to the land of Israel. Some of these theological developments found their expression naturally in the exilic reworking of Genesis. Other examples of diaspora concerns in relation to Genesis are the use of genealogies and the prominence of the diaspora novella in Genesis.

Frank Crüsemann points to the essential quality of genealogies for the social organisation of individuals who are either not organised in a state system or who reside in a young or weak state.¹⁴⁷ Both scenarios are prevalent during the exilic period, both in the diaspora and in Yehud. Genealogies provide the essential kinship framework in which social interaction is understood and where the basic experience is that of the family.¹⁴⁸ Quite a number of exilic or post-exilic works contain essential genealogies; Chronicles (especially 1 Chronicles 1-9), Ezra, Nehemiah and the Priestly Source.¹⁴⁹ The genealogy of humankind in Genesis 10 is essentially an inclusive description where all of humanity is related to each other without any separating factors. Throughout the book of Genesis this ecumenical outlook is preserved. Descendants of Noah's other sons are included indiscriminately in the ancestral line of Israel.

rise of individual responsibility; growth in the application of the concept of universal sovereignty, and the availability of worship of Yahweh to foreigners;' See Jill Middlemas, *The Trouble of Templeless Judah*, 3.

¹⁴⁶ For a discussion of this point, see Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile," 122-123.

¹⁴⁷ Frank Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity: Israel's Self-definition in the Genealogical System of Genesis," in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 57-76, esp. 62-63.

¹⁴⁸ See also Naomi Steinberg, "The Genealogical Framework of the Family Stories in Genesis," *Semeia* 46 (1989): 41-50, esp. 43.

¹⁴⁹ Frank Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity," 64. Where he also states, 'quite clearly, the family and family-orientated thinking played again an astonishingly important role after the breakdown of the state.'

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Asenath, an Egyptian, is the wife of Joseph and the mother of the important tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 46:20). Shua, the Canaanite, is the wife of Judah and mother of his children (Gen 38:3-5), similarly Simeon had a Canaanite wife and a son by her (Gen 46:10).¹⁵⁰ Even the Assyrians, who destroyed the Northern Kingdom, are descendants of Shem (Gen 10:22). Other important nations that have dealings with 'Israel' are introduced during the course of the patriarchal narratives: the Arameans, the Moabites, the Amorites, the Arabs, the Midianites, the Edomites, who are all of Abrahamic descent.¹⁵¹ The universal attitude to other nations in particular suggests that diaspora concerns influenced Genesis.

Genesis also contains narratives that are sometimes identified as diaspora novellas. Meinhold has published two articles in which he introduced the genre of diaspora novella, applied his findings to the Joseph

¹⁵⁰ Frank Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity," 66.

¹⁵¹ Even the dreaded Amalekites (Exod 17:14; Deut 25:17-19) are related through Esau to Isaac and Abraham. See also Robert R. Wilson, "The Old Testament Genealogies in Recent Research," *JBL* 94, no. 2 (1975): 169-189, esp. 172, where he points out that 'many of the OT genealogies (Genesis 10; 19:36-38; 22:20-24; 25:1-6, 12-16; 36) serve to demonstrate the relations between Israel and neighbouring tribes by tracing all the groups involved back to a common ancestor.'

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story and to the book of Esther and classified both as diaspora novellas.¹⁵² The following stories are sometimes identified as diaspora novellas:¹⁵³ the Joseph story, the book of Esther, Daniel (1-6), Tobit, Judith,¹⁵⁴ the book of Jonah¹⁵⁵ and Abraham's rescue of Lot (Genesis 14).¹⁵⁶ The following are the plot characteristics of the diaspora novella: a) a setting

¹⁵² See, Arndt Meinhold, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle I," ZAW 87, no. 3 (1975): 306-324 and Arndt Meinhold, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle II," ZAW 88, no. 1 (1976): 72-93. These two articles are based on his doctoral thesis: Arndt Meinhold, "Die Diasporanovelle - eine alttestamentliche Gattung" (PhD diss., Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald, 1971). Interestingly, in his doctoral thesis Meinhold discusses but does not include Daniel 1-6 in the genre diaspora novella (p. 146).

¹⁵³ For a criticism of the genre diaspora novella, see Hans Strauß, "Weisheitliche Lehrerzählungen im und um das Alte Testament," ZAW 116, no. 3 (1994): 379-395. See also the criticism raised by Friedemann W. Golka, "Genesis 37-50: Joseph Story or Israel-Joseph Story?," 171-172; and Horst Seebass, "Zur Quellenentscheidung in der Josephsgeschichte," 29.

The accounts of Joseph, Esther and Daniel are sometimes labelled 'court narrative;' see Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends* (HDR 26; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 1; Harald Martin Wahl, "Das Motiv des 'Aufstiegs' in der Hofgeschichte: Am Beispiel von Joseph, Esther und Daniel," ZAW 112, no. 1 (2000): 59-74; Horst Seebass, "Zur Quellenentscheidung in der Josephsgeschichte," 29.

¹⁵⁴ Luzia Sutter Rehmann discusses the rejection of table fellowship in the diaspora novellas (Esther, Daniel, Tobit and Judith) and concludes that these rejections in the diaspora novellas are not based on Jewish cultic (separatistic) purity laws, see Luzia Sutter Rehmann, "Abgelehnte Tischgemeinschaft in Tobit, Daniel, Ester, Judit. Ein Plädoyer für Differenzierung," *Lectio difficilior*, no. 1/2008 (2008): n.p., [accessed 24.04.2018]. Online: http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/08_1/sutter.htm

¹⁵⁵ Roger Syren, "The book of Jonah — a reversed Diasporanovella?," *SEÅ* 58 (1993): 7-14.

¹⁵⁶ Volker Glissmann, "Genesis 14 — a Diaspora Novella?," *JSOT* 34, no. 1 (2009): 33-45.

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in the diaspora or in a diaspora context,¹⁵⁷ b) the hero having a minority status, c) a threat to be overcome, d) a test of the hero's steadfastness, e) the foreign nation being helpless in overcoming the threat (which then highlights superiority of the hero), f) the threat being overcome (often on the initiative of the hero), g) the reason for the hero's success being pronounced by the foreign nation (as they benefited from the hero's action), h) a rise in status after the success both of the hero and his or her people (sometimes also of the host nation).

The presence of the two diaspora novellas in Genesis, namely the Joseph story and Abraham's rescue of Lot, strengthens the interpretation of Genesis from the perspective of the diaspora. Konrad Schmidt makes the point that the inclusion of such a literary genre in Genesis is inconceivable without the presence of diaspora communities beyond the homeland.¹⁵⁸

5.4.1. Some Suggestions about the Theological Mindset of the 597 Golah/Babylonian Diaspora

The diaspora existence, and especially the exiles' self-understanding of their time abroad as a cleansing salvific reformation, prompted new theological insights.¹⁵⁹ The exile was not only a catastrophe for those who experienced it as deportees but also for those who remained. Both dislocations also demanded new creative theological insights and answers about the nature of God, about the responsibility for the exile, about the nature of the restoration, about whom can be considered the true Israel, about the relation between victorious Babylonian deities and a seemingly defeated YHWH, about worship without a temple and

¹⁵⁷ This point has been added, as Meinhold does not explicitly include it but rather sees it included in the introduction of the leading character and their situation, which is marked by complicated circumstances.

¹⁵⁸ Konrad Schmid, "Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch," 109.

¹⁵⁹ For a different view, see Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit*, 104, who argues that apart from a preference for situations of exile, there is no indication that the Pentateuch was brought together during the exile.

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sacrifices, about community structuring and leadership under non-Israelite rulers, about relations to the nations around and the important question about what happened to the covenant and to the land. This section argues that Genesis reflects 'unorganised' religion¹⁶⁰ as it is not focused on temple purity¹⁶¹ or on the observance of the Torah.

The crises of the exile prompted both Ezekiel and Jeremiah to look anew at the nation and its foundational belief system and to call for re-configurations in light of the plight of exile and dispersion. Boadt summarises the similarities between these two exilic prophets and points out that both Jeremiah and Ezekiel recognised that it was not sufficient simply to return to the former ways but that a new, or even better, a *renewed* foundation was needed.¹⁶² Thus, the Babylonian *golah* community began a reformulation of the ancestral faith in order to avoid exile and scattering in the future. They stressed religious obedience and, at the same time, preparation for their ongoing diaspora existence, until the day YHWH would begin gathering the scattered people, initiating the second exodus.

The rest of this chapter attempts to use developed exilic concepts from the exilic prophetic books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and investigates

¹⁶⁰ Augustine Pagolu, *The Religion of the Patriarchs* (JSOTSup 277; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 243, notes that the patriarchal cult was informal, without fixed cult places, cult personnel, sacrifices or procedures. Augustine Pagolu also sees a parallel to Babylonian practice wherein lay persons were able to offer sacrifices (pp. 51-52).

¹⁶¹ The question that needs to be asked and addressed is whether the Judahite exiles *really* thought about the problem of worshipping YHWH in an unclean land. The first and primary concern surely must have been the question whether they, as exiled guilty sinners, could worship YHWH with an unclean heart, contra Shemaryahu Talmon, "'Exile' and 'Restoration'," 128. One way of achieving a better status before YHWH would be to learn from those who are declared *qydx* (*tsaddiq*- righteous, innocent) in Genesis (cf. Gen 18:23; 20:4). The fascinating story of Abimelech, king of the Philistines, would invite itself as an extraordinary example. See also J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 42-49.

¹⁶² Lawrence Boadt, "Common View of Exile," 15.

whether these concepts are also present in Genesis.¹⁶³ The following four indicators of the *golah* mindset will be considered: a) a belief in monotheism, b) a faith that was inclusive rather than nationalistic and exclusive, c) an outlook that was non-political, d) a belief that the presence of YHWH is not geographically limited.¹⁶⁴

5.4.2. A Belief in Monotheism

5.4.2.1. The *Golah* Mindset

Monotheism is believed by many scholars to be a later development and true monotheism is first attested in the exilic era in Babylonian-centred Deutero-Isaiah.¹⁶⁵ Einat Ambar-Armon and Amos Kloner highlight the boundary marker function of monotheism in their survey of the early Greek influence of Syria-Palestine, where they note that the Greek cultural and religious influences did not penetrate into the monotheistic

¹⁶³ The four points selected for this chapter do not make up a complete list of the theological reformulations. There are potentially more, especially with regard to covenant theology. The presence of these concepts, if they are traceable, will indicate that the redactor of JE and P was influenced by the same *golah* mindset as the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

¹⁶⁴ The themes of election, circumcision, and covenant could also potentially be treated here. Yet all of these themes are already well researched and established and a fair and comprehensive treatment is beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁶⁵ Lester L. Grabbe, "Israel's Historical Reality after the Exile," 31; Robert Karl Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel* (JSOTSup 241; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 87; John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 37. For an archaeological confirmation of this point for Judah, see Ephraim Stern, "Religion in Palestine in the Assyrian and Persian Periods," 253-255. For a defence of the Babylonian setting of Deutero-Isaiah, see Matthias Albani, "Deuterjesajas Monotheismus und der babylonische Religionskonflikt unter Nabonid," in *Der eine Gott und die Götter: Polytheismus und Monotheismus im alten Israel* (ed. Manfred Oeming and Konrad Schmid; ATANT 82; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2003), 171-201.

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territories of Judah and Samaria. Nevertheless, economic interaction and penetration is attested for both regions.¹⁶⁶ This survey, based on archaeological material, indicates that monotheism functions as a good boundary marker.

Weinberg attributes the development of monotheism to engagement with Achaemenid policies. He further establishes the intrinsic link between monotheism and universalism. Worshipping exclusively one deity raises the question of access to the deity in differing localities but more importantly raises the question of whether other people also have access to this single deity. Weinberg summarises:

the implementation by the Achaemenids of a religious policy of toleration, in any case in the lands outside of Iran, furthered a remarkable syncretism in the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, which boosted a tendency toward monotheism among the polytheistic religions. In Yahwistic monotheism or in Zoroastrian dualism, this also furthered trends toward universalism.¹⁶⁷

Yet this universalistic, or open access to YHWH the God of Judah, did not take away the essential chosenness of the exiled community but rather, reinforced it. The Babylonian *golah* was not the only national custodian of true YHWH worship in relation to the diaspora and the Judean homeland. They were also the chosen instrument to bring the nations to the worship of YHWH. Weinberg notes that the universalistic tendencies, which coexisted with the particularism of being divinely chosen, continue.¹⁶⁸ Robert Gnuse concludes his extensive research into the emergence of monotheism with the observation that biblical religion is truly an exilic or even a post-exilic phenomenon. This process

¹⁶⁶ Einat Ambar-Armon and Amos Kloner, "Archaeological Evidence of Links between the Aegean World and the Land of Israel in the Persian Period," in *A Time of Change: Judah and its Neighbours in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods* (ed. Yigal Levin; LSTS 65; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 1-22, esp. 20-21.

¹⁶⁷ Joel Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple-Community*, 32.

¹⁶⁸ Joel Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple-Community*, 32.

of moving towards monotheism culminated and found its breakthrough in the Babylonian exile.¹⁶⁹

5.4.2.2. Monotheism in Genesis¹⁷⁰

The story of humanity outside Eden begins with Eve's announcement that she conceived a male child with Adam through YHWH's aid (Gen 4:1). In the Cain narrative the deity is exclusively referred to as YHWH (in the creation accounts of Gen 1-2 both terms *ꝯꝯhla* (*Elohim*) and

¹⁶⁹ Robert Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel*, 347. See this work for an extensive review of the literature dealing with emergent monotheism in Israel and how most scholars view the crises of the exile and the Babylonian setting as formative for the development of an exclusive monotheism. See, for example Gnuse's summary (p. 87) of Hermann Vorländer's works, 'true monotheism emerged only among the Jewish exiles in Babylon, because they were an ethnic minority there, and religious self-definition helped them to preserve their ethnic identity. Several factors assisted in this transformation: 1) The cult of Yahweh was imageless, so it was easy to transplant it to a foreign land in rustic conditions of exile. 2) The upper classes of Judah primarily were deported to Babylon, and this group had a greater number of intelligentsia ready to make such a monotheistic transformation. Further, a larger percentage of exiles was committed already to the national deity in exclusivistic fashion. 3) These people were receptive to ideas in the land of exile, which helped further their own thoughts. Babylonians spoke of Marduk as a universal lord and creator, the Chaldean king Nabonidus elevated his personal deity (Sin) in monolatrous fashion, many Babylonians exhibited exclusive devotion to Nabu, and later in the exile, the impact of Zoroastrianism made itself felt. Vorländer attaches great importance to this last factor, for he believes that the Persians must have been impressed with Jewish monotheism, so that the Jews were reinforced positively in their own monotheistic convictions.'

¹⁷⁰ Robert Gnuse warns that the patriarchal religion might appear monotheistic but 'although devotion to one family deity might appear monolatrous, it is a far cry from later monotheism,' See Robert Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel*, 104. For a discussion of patriarchal monotheism, see also R.W.L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (OBT; Minneapolis, Mass.: Fortress Press, 1992), 87-104.

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μyhla hwhy (YHWH *Elohim*) are used). Genesis 4:25 narrates the birth of Seth and there Eve uses μyhla (*Elohim*) to refer to the deity. In Gen 4:26, the birth of Seth's son Enosh is followed by a statement that 'at that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD [hwhy – YHWH]' (Gen 4:20). This statement indicates that the worship of hwhy (YHWH) is understood to be the original and primary religion of all of humanity. In the beginning, all of humanity worshipped hwhy (YHWH). Similarly, Jon D. Levenson highlights that in the primeval history human-kind is presented as 'primordially monotheistic and, in fact, YHWHistic (4:26).'¹⁷¹ Yahwism is not limited to the descendants of Abraham. Abraham sends an unnamed servant to Laban to get a wife for Isaac. The servant, takes an oath by YHWH (Gen 24:3), prays to YHWH (Gen 24:12-14), waits for YHWH (Gen 24:21), blesses YHWH (Gen 24:27, 48), worships him (Gen 24:48) and testifies by YHWH (Gen 24:35, 42, 56). The Aramean Laban, in the same way, uses the personal name of YHWH (Gen 24:31, 50; 30:27, 30), as do both the Arameans Leah (Gen 29:32, 33, 35) and Rachel (Gen 30:24).¹⁷²

The patriarchs revere deities with the following names: Abraham in relation to Melchizedek ʿwyl[la (*El Elyon* – God Most High, Gen 14:29-24), the identity of this deity is immediately clarified when Abraham uses the name of the deity, he says 'ʿwyl[la hwhy' – YHWH *El Elyon*. The same combination is also used to clarify μlw[la (*El Olam* – Eternal God, Gen 21:33) where the text reads 'μlw[la hwhy' (YHWH *El Olam*), again stressing that μlw[la (*El Olam*) is identical with hwhy (YHWH). Later, a deity with the name ydv la (*El Shaddai* – Almighty God, Gen 17:1) reveals

¹⁷¹ Jon D. Levenson, "The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism," in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 143-169, esp. 148.

¹⁷² Because of these references, E. Theodore Mullen Jr. suggests that Yahwism originated in the land of Abraham's birth, Aram Naharayim, the same land from which the Judahite diaspora will return; see E. Theodore Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*, 146. His argument is unconvincing, as the form of proto-Yahwism of Laban, Leah and Rachel, with their references to Laban's divination (Gen 30:27) and Rachel's fondness of her father's household idols (Gen 31:19), do not look like positive examples that a group associated with temple-piety would want to promote.

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himself to Abraham and initiates a covenant. The narrator has already made it clear that the deity spoken of as ydv la (*El Shaddai*) is a manifestation of hwhy (*YHWH*) and not a different deity.¹⁷³ A similar clarification is seen when Jacob returns from Laban and encounters the laAtyb la (*El Bethel* - the god of Bethel, Gen 35:7). This encounter is also clarified by the narrator, who identifies the deity as μyhla (*Elohim* – God, Gen 35:1). Yet in the narratives there remains uncertainty as to whether Jacob was aware of the name and nature of ‘his God.’ He is told to get rid of the foreign gods (rknh yhla - Gen 35:2) and then builds an altar for laAtyb la - *El-Bethel* - Gen 35:7). After wrestling with μyhla (*Elohim*) at Peniel, and after being renamed larcy (*Isra-el*), he asks for the proper name of the deity (Gen 32:29), only to be told that the current term of address is sufficient. Subsequently, Jacob provides a new re-conceptualisation of the divine name when he builds an altar for larcy yhla la (*El Elohe Israel* – God, the God of Israel, Gen 33:20). The re-conceptualisation of Jacob as Israel is important, as Israel refers to his name and not yet to a nation or a geographical area. Effectively, he conceptualises God not as a local deity but as a personal deity who is with him wherever he goes.¹⁷⁴ Usually Jacob refers to the deity in direct speech as μyhla (*Elohim*). He uses a different form only three times: in Gen 31:53 he uses the peculiar reference wyba djp (*Pachad Abyv* - Fear of his father), in Gen 43:14 he uses ydv la (*El Shaddai*), and most importantly in Gen 32:9 he uses hwhy qjxy yba yhlaw μhrba yba yhla (*Elohe aby Abraham welohe aby Yitshaq YHWH* - ‘O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O YHWH’), where it is clear that Jacob’s reference to the deity should be understood as addressing YHWH. Hagar also identifies hwhy (*YHWH*) with a different name, though it might be argued that she only uses a descriptive participle to describe the main characteristic of the deity she encounters: yar la (*El Roi* – the god who sees, Gen 16:13).

¹⁷³ See also Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 232, where he comments that the reference in Gen 17:1 is a signal to the readers that YHWH is the deity who appeared to Abraham.

¹⁷⁴ However, this reference not only identifies YHWH as Jacob's God but also links him to the Abrahamic tradition.

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The divine names of *ʾwyl* la (*El Elyon*), *ʾlwl* la (*El Olam*), *ydv* la (*El Shaddai*) and *yar* la (*El Roi*) are all identified, at least by the narrator of all these stories, as simply differing names for *hwby* (YHWH).¹⁷⁵ Surprisingly, *laAtyb* la (*El-Bethel*) does not receive a small clarifying statement to identify him with *hwby* (YHWH). Yet overall, the narrative context makes it quite clear that *laAtyb* la (*El-Bethel*) is to be identified with *ʾyhla* (*Elohim*). The priestly text of Exod 6:2-3 makes the same point:

God [*ʾyhla* – *Elohim*] spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD [*hwby* – YHWH]. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty [*ydv* la- *El Shaddai*], but by my name the LORD [*hwby* – YHWH] I did not make myself known to them.”¹⁷⁶

5.4.3. A Faith that was Inclusive rather than Nationalistic and Exclusive

The prolonged presence of the diaspora community on foreign soil led to a re-thinking of the relationship between non-Judahites and Judahites/Judeans with regard to their inclusion in Yahwistic worship. It also led to a re-conceptualisation, in response to Judahite apostasy, of the nature of the true remnant community of Israel. Sparks remarks that in Deuteronomy the criterion for membership in the community was a person’s status in relation to the national deity YHWH. This religious standard for belonging exceeds any ethnic requirements. It is apparent that a foreigner (the *rg* - *ger*) could bond themselves to the national Judean deity.¹⁷⁷ This inclusive theology derives from the struggle to

¹⁷⁵ Jan Christian Gertz’s observation that the exilic writers of P present the ancestral religion in a consistently monotheistic way, which is only matched by Deutero-Isaiah, is not surprising; see Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 237. Christoph Levin also argues that the Yahwist either presupposes, or even programmatically presents, an exclusive worship of YHWH as the creator of the world and the universal God of heaven; see Christoph Levin, “The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch,” 229.

¹⁷⁶ See also Frank Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 5; or Robert Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel*, 182.

¹⁷⁷ Kenton Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 264.

come to terms with the continuous worship of Israel's national god YHWH beyond the traditional borders of Israel and Judah and the conceptualisation that YHWH is not only Israel's/Judah's national deity but the creator of the whole world and ultimately, the only deity. This established a general universal inclusivism (based on adherence to YHWH's regulations) as opposed to a national and exclusivistic religion.

5.4.3.1. The *Golah* Mindset

Living as a vulnerable small minority in a foreign land led to a rethinking of the nationalistic attitude of YHWH and his people.¹⁷⁸ The Persian period prompted a readjustment from a strictly national religion to a religion with a deity who was willing to accept non-Judeans under the now universal condition of Torah-obedience. The shift in attitude is well-summarized by Marjo Korpel in regard to Second-Isaiah. She notes that the call for merciless revenge on foreign nations is replaced by a message of hope for all nations when they align themselves with YHWH.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, as Sparks points out, in Isa 44:5 the assimilated foreigner is no longer distinguished as a *rg (ger)*.¹⁸⁰ Also in Jeremiah, the prophet was chosen in his mother's womb, to be a 'prophet to the nations' (Jer 1:5) to proclaim to all people YHWH's intentions for them.¹⁸¹ Römer makes a similar point about the inclusive attitude exemplified by Moses having both an Ethiopian and a Midianite wife.¹⁸²

Throughout the history of Judah, the nation was in contact with non-Israelites.¹⁸³ At some point in their history the need arose to address the social, economic and religious position of settled non-Israelites among

¹⁷⁸ See Joseph Blenkinsopp's interpretation of Deutero-Isaiah in light of the Babylonian *golah* in Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Second Isaiah-Prophet of Universalism," *JSOT* 41 (1988): 83-103.

¹⁷⁹ Marjo C. A. Korpel, "Second Isaiah's Coping with the Religious Crisis," 105.

¹⁸⁰ Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 317.

¹⁸¹ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 339.

¹⁸² Thomas C. Römer, "Moses outside the Torah," 9.

¹⁸³ For example, 2 Samuel 11 (David and Uriah the Hittite) or Jeremiah 38 (Jeremiah and Ebed-Melech the Cushite).

them. The most prominent term in this respect is *rg (ger)*, which refers to 'someone without the full rights of a citizen (*jrza*) [*ezrach*], a resident who occupies an intermediate position between an indigenous citizen (*jrza*) [*ezrach*] and a foreigner (*yrkn*) [*nokry*].'¹⁸⁴ One example of the protection of the socially disadvantaged *rg (ger)* can be found in Deut 24:17: 'You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge.' This regulation is followed by the motivational clause, 'but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt' (Deut 24:18; also Deut 10:18-19). Other regulations establish religious equality between the native and the sojourner (cf. Deut 31:12; Num 15:14-16).

Christiana van Houten argues that the regulations regarding equality between natives and aliens best reflect the social dynamics of the restoration period in Yehud, where the tensions between returnees and the people of the land are most evident.¹⁸⁵ Though it remains unclear as to how the labelling of the local Yehudite population as *rg (ger)* came about, granting them equal rights solved the problem of the exclusivistic concern for purity and separation, as is apparent from Ezra-Nehe-miah.¹⁸⁶ Because of the prominence of inclusive ideas in the exilic layers of the Pentateuch and the exilic prophets,¹⁸⁷ it seems more likely that the development of equality between 'Israelites' and non-'Israelites' originated out of the experience of the *golah* community.¹⁸⁸ Trito-Isaiah

¹⁸⁴ Weston W. Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah: History and Motif in Biblical Narrative* (JSOTSup 231; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 30-31.

¹⁸⁵ Christina van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law* (JSOTSup 107; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 7.

¹⁸⁶ See Daniel Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 196-197.

¹⁸⁷ For example, Exod 12:39-49 with the mixed multitude of the Exodus or Ezek 14:7.

¹⁸⁸ Contra Frank Anthony Spina, who follows the traditional dating of the sources in the Documentary Hypothesis and concludes that Israelites are only described as *gērîm* prior to the settlement period (the exception being Ezra 1:4). For a full discussion see Frank Anthony Spina, "Israelites as *gērîm*, 'Sojourners,' in Social and Historical Context," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. Carol L. Meyers and Michael O'Connor; Winona Lake, Ind.:

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even includes in the religious restored community both the observant eunuch and the foreigner (cf. Isa 56:1-8).¹⁸⁹ It has been suggested that equality between the *rg* (*ger*) and the locals is in evidence because Yehud was a Persian province in which all regulations applied to every resident. Equality between residents and aliens primarily finds its expression in the priestly regulations concerning the *rg* (*ger*). Quite a number of these regulations relate to the cult and voluntary participation in it. Yet there are also regulations for compulsory participation in the general religious festivities (cf. Lev 16:29) and also regarding dietary requirements (Exod 12:19; Lev 17:18). The general Persian attitude towards other people's religion was one of tolerance. Therefore, to suggest that the Persian authorities would be satisfied to see equality in issues of compulsory religious participation for non-Judeans seems unrealistic.¹⁹⁰

Mark G. Brett suggests the aim of Genesis is to propose a less ethnocentric understanding of Israelite identity by retelling Israelite origins.¹⁹¹ His observation is rightfully based on the inclusive, non-ethnocentric

Eisenbrauns, 1983), 321-335, esp. 329. In Ezek 20:38 the land of exile is described as *ḥayrwgm 6ra* ('*erets meghurim* – the land of sojourning). For more references in the prophetic texts (esp. Jeremiah and Ezekiel), see D. Kellermann, "גור *gûr*; גר *gēr*; גרות *gērûth*; מגורים *meghûrîm*." *TDOT* 2:439-449.

¹⁸⁹ Bernhard Gosse points out differing views inside the restoration community on the question of inclusion between Isa 56:1-8 and the book of Ezra; see Bernard Gosse, "Loi et sanctuaire à Jérusalem au retour de l'exil," *Transeu* 28 (2004): 91-115, esp. 114.

¹⁹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the *rg* (*ger*) in the priestly corpus; see Christiana van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, 109-157.

¹⁹¹ Similar, Mark G. Brett, "Reading the Bible in the Context of Methodological Pluralism: the Undermining of Ethnic Exclusivism in Genesis," in *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading the Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation* (ed. M. Daniel Carroll R.; JSOTSup 299; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 48-74, esp. 51. He notes that the text uses the generic term, Elohim, rather than YHWH, highlighting that the editor did not intend to 'promote an exclusivist religion, and a sharply defined ethnic identity.' See Mark G. Brett, *Genesis*, 26.

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presentation of human existence throughout Genesis.¹⁹² The primeval history establishes three things, (a) there is no special exclusive relationship between YHWH – the Creator God – and any people group; (b) no people group is better or superior to any other, all are equal,¹⁹³ and (c) all of humanity are related to one another, all of humanity are brothers and sisters. The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 establishes the family-relationship between all of humanity. Frank Crüsemann pointed out that this family link is established first in the descendants of the 'primal couple' and again in the descendants of Noah.¹⁹⁴ More specifically, the relationship between the Semitic families is established. Three of Shem's sons play a prominent role in the interaction between the Judahite Babylonian/Elamite diaspora in Mesopotamia and the patriarchs. The families with Shem as their shared ancestor (Gen 10:22) are, among others, Elam (with its ancient capital of Susa), Asshur (the ancestor of Assyria - in the adopted homeland of the Babylonian-Elamite diaspora) and also Aram (the name of an important Aramean nation located in southern Syria, which flourished between the 11th and 8th century BCE). The sons of Ham include, Cush (who fathered Nimrod, the mystical founder of the Assyrian empire in the land of Babylon), Egypt (one of his sons is Casluhim – ancestor of the Philistines) and also the cursed Canaan. The creation accounts in Genesis stress the interconnectedness of humanity and its overall equality.¹⁹⁵

In Genesis all the patriarchs are recorded to have been *rg (ger)* everywhere they went: in the land of Canaan, in the land of the Philistines and in the land of Egypt. This also applies to Jacob among his fellow Arameans in Haran, at least that is the way he reports the situation to Esau (Gen 32:4).¹⁹⁶ Abraham rescues the people of Sodom (Genesis 14) and subsequently intercedes on their behalf (Gen 18:16-33). Genesis

¹⁹² Similarly Clare Amos, *The Book of Genesis*, xxi.

¹⁹³ See Markus Zehnder, *Umgang mit Fremden in Israel und Assyrien: ein Beitrag zur Anthropologie des 'Fremden' im Licht antiker Quellen* (BWANT 168; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005), 546.

¹⁹⁴ See Frank Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity," 66.

¹⁹⁵ John D. Levenson, "The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism," 147.

¹⁹⁶ Moses was also a *rg (ger)* in Midian (Exod 2:22).

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does not depict the relationship between the patriarchs and their neighbour as full of conflict. At the same time, the patriarchs intermarry with a variety of other people.¹⁹⁷ The special relationship between YHWH and Israel begins with the unmerited choosing of the 'gentile' Abraham, son of an Aramean.¹⁹⁸ Meindert Dijkstra notes that Abraham was 'indeed a father of many; he was even the most ecumenical patriarch of Israel.'¹⁹⁹ The prominence of Abraham raises the overall question of the potential righteousness of other non-Israelites.²⁰⁰ Abraham's intercession for the people of Sodom carries the basic assumption that, at least in theory, even amongst the Sodomites righteous people could be found.²⁰¹ Judah's 'Canaanite' daughter-in-law Tamar is also pronounced by Judah himself to be more righteous than Judah (Gen 38:36). Genesis 4:26 hints at a universal knowledge of YHWH as the foundation of humanity.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ For a detailed discussion see 6.3.7. of this study.

¹⁹⁸ Noah was righteous (Gen 6:9) and this explains this election, yet there is loud silence about Abraham not being attributed with the same concept. Yet importantly, Jos 24:2 puts Terah and Abraham's brother Nahor (but is silent about Abram and his brother Haran) in the category of worshippers of foreign deities. Yet at the same time they are the forefathers and continuity is established with them, 'long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates.'

¹⁹⁹ Meindert Dijkstra, "The Valley of Dry Bones: Coping with the Reality of the Exile in the Book of Ezekiel," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (ed. Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel; OtSt 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 114-133, esp. 124.

²⁰⁰ And perhaps by analogy the question of righteousness without the revealed Mosaic Torah, Noah (Gen 6:8-9) and Abraham (Gen 15:6) would both be key examples of this in Genesis.

²⁰¹ See J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 45; James K. Bruckner, *Implied Law in the Abraham Narrative* (JSOTSup 335; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 126; William John Lyons, *Canon and Exegesis: Canonical Praxis and the Sodom Narrative* (JSOTSup 352; Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 183.

²⁰² The case of righteous non-Israelites is further discussed in 6.3.7. of this study.

5.4.4. An Outlook that was Non-political

Non-political refers here to the fact that both Genesis and the *golah*-influenced texts do not envision a concrete political structure. There is no indication of an ideology of immediate political restoration nor a preference for a diarchy. The political message reflects an acceptance of the status quo.

5.4.4.1. The *Golah* Mindset

The diaspora was non-political in nature.²⁰³ The lessons of rebellion were obvious to the aristocracy and to the priesthood. A lesson was learnt in the early days of the exile when the Babylonian imperial administration was quick to put down any signs of rebellion and immediately punish those responsible, be they Judean officials, Jerusalemite priests (2 Kgs 25.18-20) or exiled prophets (Jer 29:21). The Persian administration was no different in policy and would intervene quickly and act severely towards all challenges of its position.²⁰⁴ Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the Babylonian *golah*, and most probably

²⁰³ See also David Noel Freedman, "'Son of Man, Can these Bones live?': The Exile," *Int* 29, no. 2 (1975): 171-186, esp. 171. He notes that the exilic opposition to the political powers did not culminate in an earthly political vision but rather in references to a divine kingdom. A similar point (separation of religion and state), based on Hellenistic Jewish diaspora historiographies is made by Daniel R. Schwartz, "From the Maccabees to Masada: On Diasporan Historiography of the Second Temple Period," in *Jüdische Geschichte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit: Wege der Forschung: Vom alten zum neuen Schürer* (ed. Aharon Oppenheimer; München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), 29-40, esp. 40.

²⁰⁴ See Lisbeth S. Fried's study of the power relations between the imperial centre and the periphery, see Lisbeth S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (BJSUCSD 10; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 2.

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the survivors in Yehud, were very cautious about remaining non-political. They accepted the present political reality of imperial Persian power and waited for a change at some time in the future.²⁰⁵

The books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel both predict specifically the end of the Judahite kings of the line of David. Jeremiah predicts the end of the Davidic line of King Jehoiakim (Jer 36:30). Jeremiah 22:30 makes the point that King Jehoiachin is to be regarded as childless and the last of his kind. Ezekiel, on the other hand, favouring exclusively the remnant in Babylon, does not view the continuation of the Davidic line of Zedekiah in the land as rightful and thus pronounces a harsh judgment on this royal ruler (Ezek 19:14; 12:12-13; 17:16:20; 21:25-27).²⁰⁶ Ezekiel upholds King David but ignores any dynasty relating to him (Ezek 17:22-24). At the same time, King David is remembered as the ideal king who will return to deliver his people. That 'king will be the real King David' (Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-26).²⁰⁷ In line with this rejection of Judahite kingship, the book of Ezekiel only refers to Babylonian or Egyptian kings or to the exiled Judean King Jehoiachin as *9lm (melek)* and in his theological assessment Zedekiah is only a *aycn (nasy')*, a ruler, not the king of Judah.²⁰⁸ Seitz further suggests that for Ezekiel, with the 'deportation a return to the wilderness period had begun,'²⁰⁹ thus, Judah has

²⁰⁵ Klaus Koch suggests that in Ezra's re-enactment of the exodus, he waits for Levites to accompany him in the knowledge that previous returns were led by Davidic princes. He raises the question of similarity between this account and the role of Aaron and Eleazar and the anti-royalist attitude of P; see Koch, "Ezra and the Origins of Judaism," 187. The biblical narratives that are located in the diaspora seek their prosperity not in rebellion or return but rather in good citizenship of their current empire, for this see Robert Gnuse, "The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurring Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature," *JSP* 7 (1990): 29-53, esp. 31.

²⁰⁶ For a similar argument, see Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 122.

²⁰⁷ Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*, 54.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 121-148. For *aycn (nasy')* in relation to Ezekiel, see also H. Niehr, "נָסִי' nāšī'." *TDOT* 10:44-53.

²⁰⁹ Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 159.

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witnessed the end of the monarchical period and entered a period of foreign dominion.²¹⁰

Ezekiel 19:14a contains a lament for Israel's last kings, pointing to the death of the royal dynasty: 'fire has gone out from the stem of its shoots, has consumed its fruit, so that there remains in it no strong stem, no sceptre for ruling.' In Ezekiel 19, the end of the house of David is lamented ('this is a lamentation and has become a lamentation;' Ezek 19:14b), a lament that mourns primarily the downfall of the dynasty and the hopes associated with it, more than the fact that there is no ruler over the people. For the time being, the divinely sanctioned ruler over the nation is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (Ezek. 30:24-25). Ezekiel 34 further reports the replacement of the wicked shepherds of Israel with YHWH as the new shepherd of Israel. 'Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep' (Ezek 34:10). Only after YHWH restores all scattered people and judges them individually on their moral behaviour (Ezek 34:17-21) will YHWH reinstall King David over the flock (Ezek 34:23-24).

The *golah* developed a good working relationship with the imperial administration, especially the Persian administration.²¹¹ This attitude is a direct result of Jeremiah's repeated calls to accept Babylonian overlordship (Jer 27:17).²¹² At the same time, the Babylonian *golah* was incorporated in the imperial administration and was aware of the danger of non-compliance. In the course of the exile this attitude developed further into a complete rejection of even Davidic kingship,²¹³ a

²¹⁰ This is a period during which the punishment of exile must be endured, yet after the judgment restoration will be initiated. Christopher R. Seitz argues that the exilic judgment is a prerequisite for restoration; see Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 159.

²¹¹ See also the Joseph narrative, the books of Esther and Daniel and especially Ezra-Nehemiah.

²¹² See Ezekiel's assessment of King Zedekiah in Ezekiel 15-21 and also Christopher R. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*, 158-163.

²¹³ Walter Dietrich, "Niedergang und Neuanfang," 70. Similarly, Reinhard Müller in his study of kingship concludes that God's people do not need an

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view that continued to influence the Chronicles.²¹⁴ Lothar Perlitt's arguments go one step further in arguing for a complete lack of any kind of state concepts (*Staatsgedanke*) in Deuteronomy.²¹⁵ The vision expressed centres Israel not around a royal house but exclusively around the Torah. YHWH was the king of Israel before the monarchy; thus, it is in line with its theology that YHWH took up his primary position again. Similarly, McConville reads Deuteronomy as 'a thoroughgoing repudiation of the royal-Zion synthesis.'²¹⁶ His observation is based among other things on Israel, not the king, being the 'son of God' (Deut 1:31; 14:1) and the people themselves as YHWH's elect (Deut 7:6). A political restoration of the institutions of the past is not envisioned. Overall, any thought of entertaining a political restoration was a dangerous endeavour as long as the Babylonian and Persian administrations looked certain to remain in power. In the exilic period, the only socio-political structure that survived was the family unit. Therefore, it is not surprising that it became dominant in post-exilic Judaism.²¹⁷

The creation accounts in Genesis are lacking in royal motifs. Genesis portrays a differing attitude to ANE royal ideology that elevates the king as a substitutionary divine representation on earth. In passing, the

earthly ruler, because YHWH is their ruler; Reinhard Müller, "Theologie jenseits der Königsherrschaft," *ZThK* 104, no. 1 (2007): 1-24, esp. 1. See also, J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 164.

²¹⁴ Sara Japhet argues that the references to the king and to political institutions exclusively belong to the past and are irrelevant for the writer's time; see Sara Japhet, "Postexilic Historiography," 153.

²¹⁵ Lothar Perlitt, "Der Staatsgedanke im Deuteronomium," in *Language, Theology, and the Bible: Essays in Honour of James Barr* (ed. Samuel E. Balentine and John Barton; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 182-198, esp. 195. See also the endorsement of Perlitt's argument in J. G. McConville, "Restoration in Deuteronomy," 27-29.

²¹⁶ J. G. McConville, "Restoration in Deuteronomy," 30.

²¹⁷ See Joel Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple-Community*, 49. These family units then developed into Weinberg's Citizen-Temple-Community. For an assessment of the importance of the family in Genesis, see also David L. Petersen, "Genesis and Family Values," *JBL* 124, no. 1 (2005): 5-23, esp. 5-11.

priestly voice in Genesis establishes humanity as the *imago dei* and his rule is to be over all the earth (Gen 1:26-30), effectively replacing royal rights and claims of superiority with an egalitarianism of humanity.²¹⁸ Second Isaiah transfers the royal traditions to the people.²¹⁹ Rose also points out a shift in or replacement of the assumed royal endorsement at least once in Isaiah 40-55 in which the words '(my) servant' and 'whom I have chosen' are used to refer to Israel as a people.²²⁰ These accounts empower the people over and against the royal house and apply royal motifs to the general population.

5.4.4.2. Non-Political Ideas in Genesis

One of the significant elements in applying a diasporic model to the reading of Genesis is the lack of any prescription or endorsement of a particular model of human organisation. An exilic or post-exilic redaction might have highlighted a royal model to be the norm for human social organisation, thereby laying the groundwork for the re-establishment of the royal Davidic house.²²¹ A post-exilic redaction might have emphasized priestly leadership in the construction of society, thus reflecting the later Babylonian diaspora and post-exilic Yehud

²¹⁸ Cf. Mark G. Brett, *Genesis*, 27-28; Jan Christian Gertz, ed., *Grundinformation Altes Testament*, 238, or Miller, "In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," 304; Joshua A. Berman, *Created Equal*, 22. See also John T. Strong who views the origin of the 'image of God' in addressing the question of identity under Persian rule; see John T. Strong, "Israel as a Testimony to YHWH's Power: The Priests' Definition of Israel," in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* (ed. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 89-106.

²¹⁹ Edgar W. Conrad, "The Community as King in Second Isaiah," in *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson* (ed. James T. Butler, et al.; JSOTSup 37; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 99-111.

²²⁰ Wolter H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*, 215.

²²¹ Also James McKeown, who argues that Ezekiel replaces the triumphalism of Genesis 50 (James McKeown, "Genesis among the Exiles" (paper presented at the conference: Society of Old Testament Studies Summer Meeting, Sheffield, Summer 2007) .

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experience. Except for the ambiguous story of Genesis 14, kings and priests are not mentioned inside the borders of the promised land.²²² David L. Petersen even goes one step further and points out that Israel is not described as a national polity while other nations are.²²³ Therefore, it seems right to assume that this non-political presentation of the beginning of the nation was done intentionally.

It is a feature of diasporas that they exist independently of a home state and without any kind of overall/trans-diasporic hierarchical structure, focused instead on equal centres of prominence, which guide and maintain the diasporic community. However, the decision not to mention political structures as part of the creation accounts is surprising in light of the other ANE creation accounts. In a survey of ANE creation accounts, Richard J. Clifford points to the culmination of creation as 'human society organized for the service of the gods.'²²⁴ Overall, creation ideology is used to endorse a certain political system.²²⁵ A good example of this can be seen in the Akkadian *Enūma Elish* from the late-second millennium BCE,²²⁶ in which Marduk's victory over his opponents brings about the establishment of all forms of divine and human governance that the people need in order to exist. Endorsed by divine approval are Babylonian kingship and its related institutions.²²⁷ Werner Mayer published a relatively late Babylonian creation myth (from the beginning of the first millennium BCE) that exemplifies the

²²² For a discussion of the Philistine kingdom of Gerar in relation to the promised territory; see the discussion in 6.2. of this study.

²²³ David L. Petersen, "Politics in Genesis 12-36," in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* (ed. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 75-88, esp. 78.

²²⁴ Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 7.

²²⁵ J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 31. See also Joshua A. Berman, *Created Equal*, 21-22.

²²⁶ According to Richard J. Clifford the dating of *Enūma Elish* is either late Kassite (fourteenth to twelfth centuries BCE) or Isin II (Nebuchadnezzar I, 1125-1104 BCE); for further discussion see Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 83.

²²⁷ Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 8.

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different creation status of the king above humanity in general and in which the gods equip the king for service. The myth is very short, with only forty-five lines. Three quarters of the text is preserved. Immediately after the creation of humankind follows the creation of the king and his endorsement by the gods.²²⁸ What is striking for the whole book of Genesis is the complete lack of any divinely established, sponsored and sanctioned social organisation – no king, no kingdom and empire, no priest, no temple, no state, no hierarchy, no primary city and only rudimentary religious rituals.²²⁹

The world of Genesis is filled with foreign political entities but none is endorsed. Petersen remarks that other nations might be politically organised but for the author of Genesis, Israel is different.²³⁰ The only political or organisational structure that is endorsed, with its positive or negative effects, is the family: the nuclear family and the tribal family.²³¹ Some similarities are intrinsic to the role of the patriarch which, it could be argued, reflect qualities of rulers or kings: the provision of food; the welfare of the people; protection from outsiders by means of warfare and other forms of conflict resolution.²³² However, kings need a territory in which to establish their rule, something that is very much absent from Genesis. The continuous migration in Genesis undermines such a claim with royal associations.

²²⁸ Werner R. Mayer, "Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs," *Or* 56 (1987): 55-68.

²²⁹ John Van Seters points to a potential Babylonian background of a royal creation myth for the background of Ezekiel 28:12-19, which is subsequently transformed by the Yahwist in Genesis 2-3 as a shift in emphasis from royalty to humanity in general. For more details, see John Van Seters, "The Creation of Man and The Creation of the King," *ZAW* 101, no. 3 (1989): 333-342.

²³⁰ David L. Petersen, "Politics in Genesis 12-36," 86.

²³¹ David L. Petersen, "Politics in Genesis 12-36," 75.

²³² See for example, Yiu-Wing Fung, *Victim and Victimizer: Joseph's Interpretation of his Destiny* (JSOTSup 308; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 129-130.

5.4.5. A Belief that YHWH's Presence is not Geographically Limited

A fundamental ingredient for the survival of a Yahwistic diaspora is that YHWH's presence cannot be limited to Zion or the land of Israel. YHWH must be geographically unlimited and accessible.

5.4.5.1. The *Golah* Mindset

The exile and the destruction of the temple prompted a re-conceptualisation of the presence of YHWH and of temple worship in particular.²³³ Living on foreign soil far away from the Jerusalem temple prompted questions regarding the universality and accessibility of Jerusalem's God YHWH.²³⁴ Ezekiel provided answers to this question early in the exile. Firstly, the prophet was located on foreign soil and he himself was in direct contact with YHWH's spirit in his exile by the Chebar canal. He was the one who saw the true visions of YHWH (not those prophets at the temple in Jerusalem). Furthermore, the glory of YHWH leaves the temple and moves to the east of the city, when Ezekiel hears the reassuring words, 'I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone' (Ezek 11:16).²³⁵ Afterwards, the glory of YHWH leaves Jerusalem and moves to the east (Ezek 11:23). Korpel points to evidence in Second Isaiah of a rejection and modification of an exclusive Zion theology, in which the temple is not

²³³ Rimmon Kasher argues that the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 10:15) expresses the view that YHWH exclusively resides in his temple in Jerusalem and nowhere else; see Rimmon Kasher, "Anthropomorphism, Holiness and Cult: A New Look at Ezekiel 40-48," ZAW 110, no. 2 (1998): 192-208, esp. 196.

²³⁴ See for example Terence E. Fretheim, "The Priestly Document: Anti-Temple?," 313, who argues that the writers of P were opposed to the idea of the temple and favoured instead a mobile tent sanctuary.

²³⁵ For a re-examination of the question as to whether in Mesopotamia Jewish settlers also founded temples and sanctuaries see B. Oded, "'Yet I Have Been to Them למקדש נעט' in the Countries Where They Have Gone" (Ezekiel 11:16)," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume* (ed. Chaim Cohen, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 103-114.

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fundamentally necessary for contact with YHWH.²³⁶ This accessibility of the divine anywhere, his continuous presence with his people everywhere and his self-revelation (he speaks to Cain, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, even Moses²³⁷ but also Hagar and Rebekah – cf. Gen 21:17, 25:22) are the fundamental ingredients for the propagation of himself, not only as the national Judahite God but as YHWH, the universal God – the God of heaven.²³⁸

5.4.5.2. YHWH's Unlimited Geographical Presence in Genesis

Genesis does not limit worship to any place, does not prescribe a uniquely chosen place of worship (it even ignores Mt. Zion and Jerusalem) and does not limit knowledge of YHWH to any people group.²³⁹ This section will look at the locations where YHWH addresses people in Genesis. In one incident YHWH is approached in prayer by the (non-Israelite) servant of Abraham in Haran (Gen 24:12-14). Here YHWH does

²³⁶ Marjo C.A. Korpel, "Second Isaiah's Coping with the Religious Crisis," 104.

²³⁷ Christoph Levin, "Das Alte Testament auf dem Weg zu seiner Theologie," 142.

²³⁸ Christoph Levin notes that the title 'God of heaven' (cf. Gen 24:3,7) is only attested in the Hebrew Bible in the Persian and Hellenistic period and also in Elephantine; see Christoph Levin, "Das Alte Testament auf dem Weg zu seiner Theologie," 141.

²³⁹ YHWH's presence is not limited to the land of Israel. In Judg 5:4-5 Edom and Seir are described as YHWH's base camp from where he set out to rescue Israel. Sinai, Paran, Kadesh, and Teman are included in YHWH's home territory. For the references see John R. Bartlett, "Edom in the Nonprophetic Corpus," in *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition* (ed. Diana Edelman; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 13-21, esp. 15. Also Diana Edelman, "Edom: A Historical Geography," in *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition* (ed. Diana Edelman; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 1-11, esp. 9, where she points out that YHWH in Deuteronomy 33 is linked with the regions of Sinai, Seir and Paran. A similar description of Yahwistic knowledge outside Israel can be found in the accounts of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law in Midian, in relation to Horeb the mountain of God (Exod 3:1).

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not talk but, nevertheless, answers the prayer exactly as requested, indicating that his presence and his reach is not limited to the land of Canaan. Genesis 4:26 highlights that YHWH is the original deity of humanity, not simply on account of his being the creator but because he was the primary deity the people called upon. YHWH's active blessing of the patriarchs is also evident in his passive presence with them in Gerar, Haran and Egypt and throughout Canaan.

The cradle of humanity is Mesopotamia and it is there that YHWH first talks to humans. The garden of Eden invites itself to be a 'special place chosen for worship,' but words of election in regard to the garden are absent. The same 'informal' conversations between YHWH and humans that were known from inside the garden (Gen 3:9-13) continue outside it. The biblical accounts do not describe a 'double exile' – an exile from the land *and* from YHWH. In fact, the opposite is true. YHWH's presence continues with the people outside the garden (Gen 4:16). YHWH talks to Cain (Gen 4:9-13). YHWH also addresses Noah at some unknown location prior to the flood (Gen 6:13-21; 7:1-4) and also afterwards, when the ark lands on Mt. Ararat in Armenia (Gen 9:1-7, 9-17). More significant is the fact that the covenant between YHWH and Noah is established outside Canaan. This is also true for the Mosaic covenant at Mt. Sinai. In Haran, YHWH speaks to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).

Upon reaching Canaan, YHWH 'appears' to Abraham at Shechem at the oak of Moreh (Gen 12:7) and there Abraham builds an altar. After the defeat of the four Babylonian-Elamite empires, YHWH 'came to Abraham in a vision' (Gen 15:1) at an unknown location - probably by the oaks of Mamre (Gen 13:18). At Beer-lahai-roi YHWH talks to Hagar (Gen 16:13). At an unknown location YHWH 'appeared' to Abraham (Gen 17:1-21) to establish the covenant of circumcision. At Mamre again YHWH 'appeared' to Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:1-32). Afterwards YHWH appears in Gerar. He 'came to Abimelech in a dream' and engages in a conversation with the Philistine ruler (Gen 20:3-7). The next time YHWH talks it is with Hagar in the wilderness of Beersheba (Gen 21:17-18). YHWH tests Abraham regarding the sacrifice of Isaac and talks to him in Beersheba (Gen 22:1-2). Then also in the land of Moriah, on the mountain top, the angel of YHWH talks to Abraham (Gen 22:11-18). Isaac settles also at Beer-lahai-roi and here Rebekah is

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troubled about her pregnancy, so she simply ‘went to inquire’ of YHWH’ (Gen 25:22). Rebekah goes somewhere unrecorded, does something unrecorded there and receives an explanation from YHWH (Gen 25:23). Driven out of the land by a famine, Isaac is again in Gerar where YHWH appears to him and tells him to settle in Gerar (Gen 26:2-5). Upon returning to Beersheba, YHWH appears to him again and blesses him (Gen 26:24). At Bethel YHWH appears in a dream to Jacob (Gen 28:13-15). In Haran YHWH speaks to Jacob (Gen 31:3). Before crossing the Jabbok Jacob wrestles and converses with God (Gen 32:26-29).

To sum up, it is clear that YHWH talks to a variety of people – those connected to Israel and those who are outside the chosen line (Cain, Hagar, Abimelech). YHWH talks to Rebekah, who is one of the cross-cultural Aramean wives of an ‘Israelite’ (Gen 25:23). As previously noted, Genesis is very much based on a theology in which YHWH’s voice and speech are not limited to a certain place or people group, though it must also be pointed out that Isaac, Jacob and Joseph never build or erect any physical worship landmark outside the land of Canaan (though Noah does – Gen 8:20 and the one patriarchal exception is that of Abraham in the land of Moriah – Gen 22:9).²⁴⁰ The patriarchs pitched tents and erected altars in Canaan in places like Moreh at Shechem, Mamre, Bethel and Beersheba among others, in response to a divine revelation/theophany.²⁴¹

5.5. Conclusion

The disruption of the exile led to theological reformulation in relation to monotheism, an inclusive vision of humanity, non-political aspirations and the acknowledgement that YHWH is omnipresent and accessible. These points are evident from the exilic works of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. At the same time, these concepts also influenced the outlook of the book of Genesis. There is evidence that these

²⁴⁰ For a discussion of the significance of pitching tents and its repeated association with building altars in Canaan, see James McKeown, *Genesis*, 78-83.

²⁴¹ For a detailed discussion of this, see Augustine Pagolu, *The Religion of the Patriarchs*, esp. chapters 2-4.

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concepts were highly significant for the diaspora in Mesopotamia. However, it cannot conclusively be argued that they could only have originated in the diaspora. The familiarity and interaction with Babylonian, and not just wider Mesopotamian mythology, in the primeval history, suggests a strong influence of the Babylonian diaspora on the text of Genesis. Yet it cannot be established whether this influence found its way into the texts in Babylon or through diaspora-born returnees in Yehud.

Chapter 6

Anthropological Diaspora Characteristics in Genesis

6.1. Introduction

The aim of this research is primarily to establish if the setting of the community responsible for the bringing together of the texts of Genesis can be described as having being influenced by a diaspora mindset.¹ This could have been done in Babylon but it also could have been done by returnees to Yehud. Chapter 5 has examined the impact of the *golah* on Genesis, in relation to source critical considerations, literary similarities and theological diaspora concerns. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the presence and/or absence of the nine identified characteristics of a diaspora community in early antiquity in the book of Genesis. The aim is to highlight any indications in Genesis that may suggest that the editor's physical location was the diaspora and that he may have reshaped and retold the ancient stories in light of his diaspora experience, thereby, providing identity markers for the Judahite diaspora.²

¹ For the suggestion that the stories of the patriarchs are retold in light of a diaspora experience; see Meindert Dijkstra, "The Valley of Dry Bones," 133.

² E. Theodore Mullen Jr., argues that the Tetrateuch was compiled to provide 'a supplementary introduction to the Deuteronomistic work' in order that the group could redefine their identity according to their new circumstances. The main aim was to establish social and religious boundary markers that would create an ethnic identity for the colonized Judeans in Judah. He also suggests that those responsible were at least separated by a full generation, probably two, from a direct experience of their ancestral homeland. For Mullen, the Tetrateuch establishes the boundary marker of Israel and defines Israel religiously, cultural and ethnically. However, this does not explain the origin of Genesis, as all boundary markers (religious, cultural, ethnic) are watered down. Even in Mullen's own reading, cross-cultural marriage is practised by the patriarchs, the relation to the 'others' is overwhelmingly positive and friendly

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One expected shortcoming of this attempt to investigate a diaspora mindset in Genesis, through the aid of characteristics developed in contemporary anthropological diaspora research is that the text of Genesis was not created as a conscious, reflective diaspora document. The compiler is not interested in producing a modern scientific diaspora study manual but rather records, preserves and retells narratives that reflect his theological mindset and experience in the diaspora. This can be seen in Genesis in the significant lack of narrated forced expulsion and also in the scattering to different centres.

In this investigation, I will not discuss in detail all the minor characters who experience dislocation and never return to their place of origin.

and even Laban the Aramean and Abimelech the Philistine know YHWH. See E. Theodore Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*, 91.

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These are Lot,³ Hagar,⁴ Ishmael,⁵ Rebekah,⁶ Leah and Rachel,⁷ Esau,⁸ Keturah and her children.⁹ Notably, the case of Rebekah and Leah is unique among these minor characters, as they are the only ones who settle permanently in Canaan. No member of the patriarchal family is born in Canaan, with the exception of Jacob and possibly Benjamin (Gen 35:16-20).¹⁰

³ Lot comes with Abraham from Haran but then makes his dwelling east of the land.

⁴ Hagar is Egyptian, and both she and Ishmael, after being driven out, settled in the wilderness of Paran, which is south of Beersheba and north of Sinai. Hagar did not return to her country of origin.

⁵ Ishmael's wife is from Egypt, and his children settled 'from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria' (Gen 25:18). He also did not return to the land, except to bury his father.

⁶ Rebekah is from 'Abraham's country and his kindred' (cf. Gen 24:4), from Mesopotamia, the city of Nahor (Gen 24:10) and specifically from Paddan-aram (Gen 25:20). She journeyed to Canaan in order to marry Isaac. With Isaac she later settles in Gerar, the land of the Philistines, before journeying up north again. It is not known where she died but she was buried in the family grave east of Mamre. Alexander Rofé suggests that Genesis 24 is a fifth century BCE composition for a variety of linguistic and theological reasons; see Alexander Rofé, "An Enquiry into the Betrothal of Rebekah," in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Erhard Blum, et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 27-39.

⁷ Leah and Rachel are both from Abraham's family in Paddan-aram. Both flee back with Jacob to the land of Canaan. Rachel dies in childbirth and is buried in Ephrath (Gen 35:19). But Leah is buried in the ancestral family grave at Mamre (Gen 49:31).

⁸ Esau, the ancestral father of Edom, settled 'in the land of Seir, the country of Edom' (Gen 32:3; 33:16; 36:8).

⁹ There is no evidence in the text of the origin (place and ethnicity) of Keturah, nevertheless she is sent out of the land 'eastward to the east country' (Gen 25:6).

¹⁰ However, the narrator makes the statement that all of Jacob's children were born in Paddan-aram (Gen 35:26). Does the narrator want to stress the

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In the creation accounts humans were commanded to multiply and fill the whole earth, indicating that human habitation is global rather than geographically limited.¹¹ Repeatedly the command is given to fill the earth: first to the sea creatures (Gen 1:22), secondly to the birds (Gen 1:22), thirdly to the human race (Gen 1:28) and perhaps by analogy also to the other living creatures that were created just prior to human-kind.¹² Chapter 2 employs a specific focus, limiting human movement for a time to a well prepared garden sanctuary, because the ground was not yet ready to support human life.¹³ The founding national myth of all of humanity - the exit from the garden of Eden - puts a diaspora marker on all subsequent aspects of human existence.

After rejection from Eden, human life is marked and defined by an intrinsic diaspora condition.¹⁴ This manifests itself in the knowledge of

fact that *all* are born in a foreign land? For a discussion of this problem; see also George W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), 216.

¹¹ There seems to be a tension in biblical theology between the cultivated land with its positive connotation and wild land with its negative connotation for human settlement (cf. Deut 23:28-32; 2 Chr 36:21).

Also, the ideology of 'one people – one country' does not find its divine endorsement or sanctioning in Genesis. The Song of Moses in Deut 32:8 establishes the correspondence between ethnicity and territory. See also Frank Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity," 68.

¹² Laurence A. Turner sees Gen 1:28 as the first important plot announcement which defines the whole of the primeval history; see Laurence A. Turner, *Announcements of Plots in Genesis* (JSOTSup 96; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 47.

¹³ See William J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order - Biblical Eschatology in Focus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994), 24-25.

¹⁴ See also Stefan Rossbach, "The Impact of 'Exile' on Thought: Plotinus, Derrida and Gnosticism," *History of the Human Sciences* 20, no. 4 (2007): 27-52, esp. 29, in which he describes exile as a 'constitutive condition that defines human existence as such.' For a similar assessment of the exilic condition of alienation; see Bob Becking, "Does Exile Equal Suffering? A Fresh Look at Psalm 137," in *Exile and Suffering* (ed. Bob Becking and Dirk Human; OtSt 50; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 183-202, esp. 202. Gerhard Langer makes the point that exile

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being strangers and sojourners on earth and not living within the perfect divine world order of creation.¹⁵ Life is now dislocated and out-of-place in relation to the divine.¹⁶ Cain's exile is often taken as an intensification of the exilic pattern, away from God, away from the family, into a life of wandering. Cain's murder does not go unpunished but the narrative itself stresses instead the care and protection that YHWH provides for Cain.¹⁷ The brief genealogy of Cain includes a short list of cultural advances over a couple of generations (something that is mirrored in Seth's genealogy). The advances include urbanisation, animal husbandry, musical instruments and metallurgy, all of which seem to suggest that an exilic or diaspora life is not marked as a place of oppression, homelessness and isolation.¹⁸

The identification of Canaan as the new homeland of the patriarchs is a result of the deteriorating relationship between the patriarchs and their kinsmen in Paddan-aram. The relationship remained stable in the time

belongs to the *condito humana*; see Gerhard Langer, "Exil und Diaspora als Movens jüdischer Identität," 19-20.

¹⁵ Similarly, Rolf Rendtorff, "'Covenant' as a Structuring Concept in Genesis and Exodus," *JBL* 108, no. 3 (1989): 385-393, esp. 388.

¹⁶ For a similar assessment see Craig G. Bartholomew, "The Theology of Place in Genesis 1-3," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham* (ed. J. G. McConville and Karl Möller; LHBOTS 461; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 173-196, esp. 191-192.

¹⁷ Similarly, Terence E. Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol 1* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1994), 321-674, esp. 374-375.

¹⁸ Ronald A. Simkins suggests that the reference to the knowledge of good and evil in Gen 3:22 should be understood as 'a merism for universal or cultural knowledge' through which humanity would be enabled to develop culture; see Ronald A. Simkins, "Gender Construction in the Yahwist Creation Myth," in *Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series)* (ed. Athalya Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 32-52, esp. 47. Human existence in Eden is in a state of nakedness, and this can be interpreted as a lack of civilisation. Other ANE creation myths peak with the gift of civilisation, however, in the biblical account civilisation is not imparted from the outside but rather develops out of humanity's intrinsic creativity.

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of Abraham and Isaac. However, in Jacob's time, and especially after he flees with his family from Laban, the ancestral family relations deteriorate and ultimately all contact between the two sides breaks down.¹⁹ A heap and a pillar are erected to mark the boundary between these new rival families. No further contact is ever made. The breakdown shifts the new homeland emphasis away from Haran to the land of Canaan.²⁰ At the same time, this family breakdown raises the question of the continuation of Jacob's family line. Jacob has twelve sons; where will he find wives for them to continue the family line? Genesis covers in silence the ethnic origin of the wives of Jacob's sons, except for Joseph's Egyptian wife, Asenath.²¹

The relationship between the patriarchs and the homeland is marked by a repeated inability to settle in the land permanently. Canaan is regarded as the new homeland, yet the patriarchs repeatedly leave it. Abraham leaves twice but returns to die in Canaan. Abraham refers to

¹⁹ Rachel and Leah were quite willing to break the ties with their father (Gen 31:14); see J. E. Lapsley, "The Voice of Rachel: Resistance and Polyphony in Genesis 31.14-35," in *Genesis: A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series)* (ed. Athalya Brenner; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 233-248, esp. 235.

²⁰ Erhard Blum notes the prominence of what he calls 'Aufbruchsbefehle' - the commands to leave from somewhere. Throughout the narratives he identifies four such orders: Gen 12:1 tells Abraham to leave Mesopotamia/Haran; Gen 26:2 prohibits Isaac to migrate to Egypt; Gen 31:13 tells Jacob to leave Mesopotamia/Haran; and Gen 46:1-4 allows Jacob to move to Egypt (with the promise of return). Thus, Canaan becomes the destination of all patriarchal migration from both the 'peripheries' of Mesopotamia and Egypt. See Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, 298 and 342.

²¹ Except for the reference in Gen 38:2 in which Judah marries an unnamed Canaanite woman (Bath-shua according to 1 Chr 2:3). Sara Japhet points out that Judah's most important tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, are descendants of foreign women; see Sara Japhet, "Can the Persian Period Bear the Burden? Reflections on the Origins of Biblical History," in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 351; repr. from *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Division A* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1999).

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‘my country and my kindred’ but the reference is to his Aramean homeland, not Canaan (Gen 24:4). Isaac, who was prohibited by his father from travelling to Haran to get a wife, leaves Canaan once, then returns to it for good. Jacob leaves the land once to go to Haran and later returns. He then leaves again to go to Egypt and ‘returns.’ The second of his returns highlights the tension and ambiguity that marks the connection of the patriarchs to the land of Canaan. YHWH promises Jacob that he would bless him in Egypt and also that he would bring him back (Gen 46:4). Jacob does return subsequently but he is already dead. This is a twist that the reader does not anticipate, which hints at the possibility that living in Canaan is important but that alternatives exist. After Abraham arrived in the land and received the promise that his offspring would settle there, this final settlement is continuously shifted to the future. The promise awaits fulfilment at the end of the book of Genesis, as the entire patriarchal family remains voluntarily in Egypt. Expectation and ambiguity remain throughout Genesis regarding the relationship between having a homeland and living in it. Overall, Genesis establishes that Canaan is the homeland; nevertheless, it also accumulates a growing number of unfulfilled expectations regarding final settlement in Canaan.

6.2. A Preliminary Statement about the Size and Location of the Land of Israel in Genesis

In order to apply the modified diaspora characteristics to the book of Genesis, some preliminary considerations regarding the topic of homeland in Genesis must be made. The problem is the extent and size of the promised territory in Canaan. This needs to be addressed in order to determine when characters leave and enter the territory of the future Israelite and Judahite states.

One missing element in the discussion of a Judahite diaspora homeland in Genesis is a proper name for the territory, especially a name associated with a history of settlement of either Israelites or preferably, Judahites. In the overwhelming majority of cases (22 times), the name given is the land of Canaan. Once Joseph calls it ‘the land of the Hebrews’ (Gen 40:15). Twice it is simply referred to as the ‘land of your fathers’:

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once by YHWH when he tells Jacob to leave Laban (Gen 31:3) and once by Jacob, now renamed Israel, expressing his wish for a burial place to his son Joseph (Gen 48:21). There are no other neutral descriptions of the homeland but consistently throughout Genesis the description 'land of Canaan' is used. This calls for an explanation in light of the presumed exilic/diaspora redaction. It also must be noted that both the narrator and the characters (especially in the Joseph novella) use the phrase 'land of Canaan' when referring to Canaan, stressing that 'Israel' came as an outsider to the land.²²

The case of the land of the Philistines (מִטְּלַפ גֵּרָא - *erets pelishtim*) in and around Gerar needs special consideration in order to decide if it is part of the ancestral homeland or not.²³ This discussion is especially important in relation to Isaac, the son of promise. It must be noted that the Philistine settlement is always Gerar, not the more powerful and historically more troublesome Philistine city states of Gath, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, or Ekron.²⁴ Historically, at least parts of the Negev were occupied by Judahites and belonged to the territory of the tribe of Judah and Simeon. In the 7th century BCE the wider Negev saw an increase in Judahite settlements. Particularly around the time of the Babylonian invasion, military pressure both from the Edomites and Arab

²² See for example, Nili Wazana, "Natives, Immigrants and the Biblical Perception," 221.

²³ This description מִטְּלַפ גֵּרָא (*erets pelishtim*) is only used in Genesis 21 (verses 32 and 34). Genesis 26 has five references to the Philistines (מִטְּלַפ - *pelishtim*) in Gen 26:1, 8, 14, 15, 18.

²⁴ U. Cassuto unconvincingly argues that the vicinity of Gerar is included in the land of the Canaan (pp. 213-215). In his understanding of the geographical description he is also subsequently forced to include the territory of Sodom and Gomorrah as part of the land of Canaan (p. 214). When discussing the separation of Abram and Lot his interpretation runs into exegetical problems he tries to overcome in the following manner: 'Lot chose an area that did not belong to Canaan proper' (p. 295) and 'it is at the extremity of the territory of Canaan ... far from the centre of the Promised Land' See U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part II from Noah to Abraham* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1964), 366.

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tribes increased.²⁵ Twice in Genesis the patriarchs sojourn in Gerar and encounter the king of the Philistines. Furthermore, the land is twice explicitly described as the 'land of the Philistines' (Gen 21:32, 34) in contrast to the usual land of Canaan. Abimelech calls the territory 'my land' (yxra - *eretsy* - Gen 20:15), a statement that remains undisputed by the narrator, Abraham or YHWH. The reader therefore has the impression that the land of the Philistines did, indeed, belong to the Philistines. This creates an ambiguity and leaves a problem as to how to interpret the encounters with the king of the Philistines.²⁶ Is the 'land of the Philistines' part of the overall land of Canaan and just currently inhabited by the Philistines, or is it an entity distinct from it?

In a Persian period reading, does the king of the Philistines simply represent a foreign ruler in a foreign land or does he represent aspects of the foreign imperial rule in Yehud? Genesis does not provide an answer as to whether the Philistine territory should be regarded as part of the original/promised homeland. Gerar is located in the western part of the Negev and it is the *southern* border of the land of Canaan in Gen 10:19. The extent given in Gen 15:18 does not define the western or southwestern border but only the southern and northern limits. More importantly, the Philistines are not included in the list of people groups to be ousted from that promised territory in Gen 15:19-21. The

²⁵ Albert de Pury links the author of P to the Persian period, around 520 BCE in Jerusalem, because of the presence of Idumeans in the land. He points out that for P, neither Ishmael nor Esau were expelled from the land. On the contrary, both had legitimate claims to the land as they were direct heirs to the promises made to Abraham. See Albert de Pury, "Situer le cycle de Jacob," 226-227.

²⁶ David Jobling and Catherine Rose point to a conflicting interpretation of the term 'Philistines' in relation to Genesis and in relation to Judges-Samuel. They note that the Rabbinic sources insist that the Philistines in Genesis and the Philistines in Judges and Samuel are altogether different people. A shift that can also be seen in the Septuagint's translation. 'Before Judges, it uses the neutral transliteration *phulistiim*, but beginning with Judges it switches to the pejorative *allophuloi*.' See David Jobling and Catherine Rose, "Reading as a Philistine: The Ancient and Modern History of a Cultural Slur," in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 381-417, esp. 404.

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ambiguity continues in relation to Isaac's place of birth, which is simply not narrated. Did Abraham return to Mamre after his sojourn in Gerar, where the birth of Isaac was promised (Gen 17:15-18:19)? Did he stay in Gerar, as no movements are recorded away from Gerar (Gen 20:15)? Or, did they (pre-birth or perhaps post-birth) move east to Beersheba, to which Abimelech and Phicol travel in order to make a peace covenant with Abraham (Gen 21:31)? Alternatively, does this passage indicate that Beersheba was still within Gerar's territory, since Gen 21:34 concludes, 'and Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines'? And how much time has passed between the birth of Isaac and the treaty with Abimelech? Theologically, it might be argued that as the 'son of promise,' Isaac should be born in the 'land of promise,' but why does Isaac continuously settle in the no-man's-land border region between Canaan, Gerar and Egypt?

For this research, the ambiguity is not resolved and the Philistines and the encounters with the king of Gerar are treated as a special case. When YHWH prevents Isaac from going to Egypt in Genesis 26, the ambiguity continues because there is a famine 'in the land' (that is, in Canaan). Hence, Isaac moves to Gerar where YHWH appears and prohibits him from going to Egypt but counsels him, 'Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you' (Gen 26:2). YHWH continues, 'sojourn in this land . . . to your offspring I will give all *these lands*' (Gen 26:3); does the plural *txra* (*eretsot*) indicate that a territory bigger than Canaan will be inherited by Israel? Or, does it imply that the land of the Philistines is part of Canaan? Isaac is also the only patriarch who is presented as a sedentary farmer (and not a semi-nomad) but this is mentioned only in relation to his presence in *that* land, Gerar: 'and Isaac sowed in that land' (Gen 26:12).

The book of Genesis preserves two conflicting geographical maps of the extent of the land promised to the nation in the future. There is the description of the boundaries of the territory of the Canaanites in the Table of Nations in Gen 10:19: 'and the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.' But Gen 15:18-21 describes the extent of the land that will be inherited by Abraham's descendants as follows: 'to your offspring I give this land,

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from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.²⁷ Genesis 15 gives the impression that the promised territory is bigger than the land of the Canaanites, as even people groups outside Canaan are mentioned (even the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites and Girgashites seem to have been included in the territory of the Canaanites in Gen 10:19). Genesis 15 describes roughly the north-south extension of the land but does not provide any information about western, especially the southwestern border, of this territory. Therefore, in this reconstruction, prominence is given to Genesis 10 with its more detailed information about the southwestern borders of the land of Canaan.

The Table of Nations in Gen 10:19 draws the narrational map of the territory of the Canaanites as extending from Sidon in the north towards Gerar in the south and from there eastwards to Sodom and Gomorrah on the Dead Sea.²⁸ This seems to be in line with the well-defined province of Canaan, which is known from Egyptian sources of the 18th and 19th Dynasty (the Amarna Letters written in the second half of the 14th century BCE).²⁹ This territory roughly corresponds to the extension of the Kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah together.³⁰ The fundamental question is whether the description of the Canaanite territory in Genesis follows the coastal line in connecting Sidon to Gerar, or whether it excludes the non-historical and non-traditional Israelite/Judahite coastal settlements in favour of a border along the

²⁷ 2 Kgs 24:7 makes the point that the land from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River now belongs no longer to the Egyptian Pharaoh but to the King of Babylon.

²⁸ See also Niels Peter Lemche, *The Canaanites and Their Land: The Tradition of the Canaanites*, 75-100. For a corrective reading of Lemche and a detailed map of Northern Canaan according to administrative and legal documents, see Anson F. Rainey, "Who is a Canaanite?," 2.

²⁹ See Anson F. Rainey, "Amarna and Later," 169.

³⁰ 2 Kgs 15:29 lists as the most northern Israelite town Ijon, which is roughly 15 km south of Sidon in the Israelite deportation of 733 BCE.

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edge of the central hill settlements.³¹ In Gen 10:19, the western border connects Sidon with Gerar, not with Gaza near the Mediterranean coast. Gaza is only the qualifier to indicate where Gerar is located and where the borderline of Canaan turns eastwards. Nadav Na'aman identifies Gerar with Tel Haror (roughly 20 km southeast of Gaza).³² He also argues successfully that the River of Egypt (Gen 15:18) is to be identified with the Nahal Besor just a few of kilometres south of Gaza.³³ Overall, it seems fair to conclude that the coastal plain was not understood as forming part of Canaan in Gen 10:19.

The narratival map also establishes that the cities mentioned are exterior border markers and Canaan is *in between* these locations. Genesis 10:19 used the preposition d[(*ad*) to indicate the extent of territory, its meaning being: as far as, until, toward, up to. Genesis 10:19 reflects an

³¹ Judg 1:27-36 narrates the failure of the conquest period to drive out the inhabitants of the coastal plain and as a consequence the coastal plain was never part of the historical Israelite/Judahite settlement area.

³² See Nadav Na'aman, "The Shihor of Egypt and Shur That is Before Egypt," in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction: Collected Essays Volume 1* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 273; repr. from TA 7 (1980).

³³ Nadav Na'aman, "The Brook of Egypt and Assyrian Policy on the Border of Egypt," in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction: Collected Essays Volume 1* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), repr. from TA 6 (1979); also Nadav Na'aman, "Province System and Settlement Pattern in Southern Syria and Palestine in the Neo-Assyrian Period," in *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction: Collected Essays Volume 1* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), repr. from *Neo-Assyrian Geography* (ed. M. Liverani, Rome: Università di Roma, 1995). See the map on page 228 of the southwestern border of the kingdom of Judah in relation to the Philistine town of Gerar. Manfred Görg agrees with Na'aman's assessment that Nahal Besor is the right identification for the earliest references; see Manfred Görg, "Egypt, Brook of," ABD 2:321. Nahum M. Sarna emphasises the traditional identification with the Brook of Egypt in Gen 15:18 as the Wadi el'Arish, just before the Sinai desert; see Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 117; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 333; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 438.

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understanding in which the coastal plain was *not* occupied by Israelites; even so, texts like Num 34:2-12, Josh 15:1-62 and Ezek 47:15-20 envision the Mediterranean coast to be the western border for Israel. The other main text in Genesis, Gen 15:18, which might provide information about the borders of Canaan, only gives a generous south-north extension of the territory to the north - to the great river the Euphrates (Haran lies north of the Euphrates) and the river of Egypt in the south. The eastern border is the Jordan River between the Sea of Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee) and the Salt Sea (Dead Sea), which plays an important role in determining Lot's continuous settlement east of the land of Canaan.³⁴

In conclusion, it must be stressed that that Gerar is treated in Genesis as a distinct ethnic and political entity from the land of Canaan; thus, it will not be treated as homeland but rather as a foreign land in this study. People leave Canaan when they are going to Paddam Aram in the north, to Gerar or Egypt in the south, or cross to the east beyond the demarcation of the Jordan river.

Related to the question of homeland and mobility in Genesis is the question of how best to understand the meaning of the verb *rwg* (*gur*), generally translated into English as 'to sojourn' (cf. Gen 10:12; 19:9; 26:3; 47:4). Spina argues that the best modern translation of it as a noun is 'immigrant' as it, 'calls attention to the original circumstances of social conflict' that led to migration in the first place.³⁵ U. Cassuto interprets

³⁴ For the problem of Jewish settlements east of the Jordan in Transjordan in biblical and post-biblical traditions; see Adam Lowry Porter, "Transjordanian Jews in the Greco-Roman Period", 11-61. For Lot's choice to leave Canaan; see Larry R. Helyer, "The Separation of Abram and Lot: its Significance in the patriarchal Narratives," *JSOT* 26 (1983): 77-88, esp. 79.

³⁵ See Frank Anthony Spina, "Israelites as *gērîm*, 'Sojourners,' in Social and Historical Context," 323. He also argues that the *gērîm* tradition must pre-date the exile, especially because the term *gērîm* is not used in relation to the Babylonian exile. Spina is right in so far as *gērîm* is used exclusively for the historical pre-settlement period, yet at the same time it is difficult to see how an appreciation of *rg* (*ger*) and its sojourning tradition could be applied to the

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rwg (*gur*) to mean a 'short visit.'³⁶ Wenham suggests rwg (*gur*) means 'to live as an immigrant' with 'the intention of long-term settlement.'³⁷ The interpretation of rwg (*gur*) is coloured by its close proximity to rg (*ger* - sojourner, temporary resident, immigrant); for that reason, Nahum Sarna understands sojourning to mean 'temporary residence.'³⁸ McKeown rightfully summarises the meanings as 'lengthy periods of settlement rather than short-term visits.'³⁹ The experiences of the patriarchs all reflect, throughout their four generations (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his children), an active state of sojourning (Abraham in Gen 17:8; 23:4, Jacob in Gen 28:4, Isaac in Gen 35:27; 37:1 and Esau and Jacob in Gen 36:7). Genesis does not give an account of the patriarchs or their relatives (Lot, Esau) settling down in the land of Canaan or any other place.⁴⁰ Settling in a homeland is a project for the future. Two pieces of property are purchased in Canaan, neither of which are occupied. Abraham buys an ancestral burial site for his clan at Machpelah, east of Mamre (Gen 23:20). Jacob buys a field to settle down before the city of Shechem (Gen 33:19) but then Simeon and Levi kill all the male inhabitants of Shechem, which prompts Jacob and his family to save their lives and flee instead of occupying the land they bought (Gen 35:5).

forced punitive scattering of the exile, without fundamentally negative altering the rg (*ger*) tradition of the patriarchs.

³⁶ U. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 346.

³⁷ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 287.

³⁸ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 93.

³⁹ James McKeown, *Genesis*, 81-82.

⁴⁰ Ishmael seems to be the exception here. Twice it is mentioned that he bvy (*yashab* - lived, settled, dwelt) in the wilderness of Paran (Gen 21:20, 21). He does not sojourn; he is described as settled. The same word is used in Jeremiah's advice to the exiles to settle in Babylon (Jer 29:5, 28). Lot is also described as settling (bvy- *yashab*) in Zoar (Gen 19:30).

6.3. The Modified Characteristics applied to Genesis

The modified diaspora characteristics are extracted and adopted from the sociological and anthropological diaspora characteristics as identified by William Safran and Robin Cohen (see chapter 2). These nine modified diaspora characteristics are used in this study as the working definition of *diaspora* in antiquity and will subsequently be applied to the book of Genesis in order to highlight the diaspora influence on the textual tradition.

6.3.1. Dispersal from an Original Homeland, often Traumatically, to Two or more Foreign Regions

The basic meaning, according to the OED, of the verb ‘to disperse’ is ‘to cause to separate in different directions, to throw or drive about in all directions, to scatter, to rout.’ All of these meanings are value free descriptions that simply describe movement from one place to another. In Genesis, one of the main reasons for dispersal is famine. The characteristic of dispersion into ‘two or more foreign regions’ does not mean that a diaspora community, or its literary representative, needs to be dispersed progressively to two or more foreign regions. In general, a dispersed community needs to take root in more than one foreign region in order to qualify as a diaspora.

A unique feature of the text of Genesis is that both the primeval history and the patriarchal history feature the characteristic of dispersion from the character’s original place of settlement. This is all done without ascribing any sense of trauma to the narrated character, either internally, or through the narrator.⁴¹ The agent of the expulsion is never a foreign power. This would strengthen the overall notion of victimhood in the characters and their descendants. It also would create a sense of

⁴¹ Internal emotions were not always part of the story telling convention in antiquity; see Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), 8.

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inherited victimhood, even paired with thoughts of revenge and retribution, and an overall insistence on re-claiming unlawfully lost territory. This whole strand of thought is completely absent from the texts of Genesis. Not even the direct heirs to the promise of Abraham, Esau and Ishmael, are portrayed in such a way as to hint that they might want to reclaim their father's land.⁴² YHWH appears as the active agent of expulsion in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, of Cain from the land of Nod and humanity from the tower of Babel. Three times the patriarchs are driven from the land because of famines (caused by a 'higher force'): Abraham to Egypt (Gen 12:10) and Isaac to Gerar (Gen 26:1) and Jacob and his sons to Egypt (Gen 46). Even Jacob cannot complain about his expulsion, as the deception of his father and the stealing of his brother's blessing prevents the readers from associating unjust expulsion and victimhood with him.

However, Genesis does not portray diaspora exclusively as a positive lifestyle a person willingly pursues in order to embrace its transnational status. Genesis provides evidence that both the pain of dislocation and the quest for settlement and return are present in the narratives. The first diaspora prototype is Cain, who is condemned to a life as 'a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth' (Gen 4:13), to which Cain responds, 'my punishment is greater than I can bear' (Gen 4:14). Genesis does not distinguish between Canaan and any other territory, the text does not know of a safe homeland with the exception being Eden. Isaac experiences tension with the herdsmen in Gerar (Gen 26:19-22) but Abraham also experiences the same tension with his nephew's herdsmen (Gen 13:8). Both Abraham and Isaac express fear of being helpless in a foreign land (Egypt and Gerar, Gen 12:12; Gen 20:11; Gen 26:7) but not when they are in Canaan, where they are portrayed as equally helpless foreigners. However, all their fears are based on some non-existent racial stereotypes, which these three encounters with the foreign rulers correct. The case of Jacob is even more pointed, as he is an outsider everywhere he goes. He is a sojourner in Canaan though he is born there (Gen 36:7; 37:1). In his Aramean ancestral home, he is also a sojourner

⁴² See 6.3.7 for a detailed discussion of the conflicts in Genesis.

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(Gen 32:4) and when he finally settles in Egypt, he is describing his position and his life there simply as 'sojourning' (Gen 47:9).

Noah is a different case altogether. His original place of settlement is unknown, yet post-flood, he is resettled in the mountains of Ararat, indicating dispersion. The exile that Noah represents is essentially salvific (for himself and his family but more importantly for the continuation of humanity) – it is a kind of exile to initiate a new beginning.⁴³ Noah's case carries another common (intentional or not) feature of diaspora literature, that of the diaspora hero facing challenges and hardship he or she overcomes by his or her virtue. This results in the hero's deliverance from adversity but not only his own rescue, as it generally also includes the salvation of his people.⁴⁴ This is beautifully expressed in the Joseph story, where the diaspora hero announces, 'but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people are kept alive' (Gen 50:20).⁴⁵ In Noah's case the continuity of human life is in jeopardy and through his virtuous life, human life is able to continue on earth.

Dispersion due to human factors is the key reason for the scattering of the patriarchs and their families away from Canaan. The dispersion is sometimes only for a time, at other times it is for good. Abraham is forced by a severe famine to leave the land of Canaan (Gen 12:10) as is Isaac (Gen 26:1) and Jacob and his family. Jacob's family settles in Egypt during the famine, where they find work and stay, even after the famine is over. Earlier in his life Jacob leaves the land due to fear (or was it a timely wife-finding mission?). First, he flees to Haran for fear of his

⁴³ See Richard H. Moe, "In the Beginning: Myth and History in Genesis and Exodus," *JBL* 109, no. 4 (1991): 577-598, esp. 586.

⁴⁴ Daniel Smith-Christopher reconstructs the social setting of the exilic and postexilic period using sociological findings of deportation and relocation. For him the diaspora novella is part of the '*creative response* to social realities' (p. 10). One expression of this 'folklore of hope' is the emphasis on the diaspora (minority) hero; see Daniel Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 153-170.

⁴⁵ Richard J. Clifford made the interesting point that it was Judah who first recognized how YHWH brought good out of evil (Gen 38:26); see Richard J. Clifford, "Genesis 38: its Contribution to the Jacob Story," *CBQ* 66, no. 4 (2004): 519-532, esp. 520.

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brother's murderous desire (Gen 27:43-45). Then he flees again after cheating Laban, this time together with his wives, back to his original home in Canaan (Gen 31:20-21). All relatives of the patriarchs who are excluded from possessing the land of Canaan move voluntarily to different areas of settlement. Lot moves out of Canaan to the Jordan valley in the direction of Zoar (Gen 13:11-12).⁴⁶ Subsequently, Esau and his family leave voluntarily for the land of Seir (Gen 36:6-8).

Forced expulsion also occurs in the narratives in Genesis. Hagar and Ishmael are sent away into the wilderness of Beersheba (Gen 21:14). Isaac is driven in stages out of Gerar by Abimelech (Gen 26:16) and his herdsmen until he finally settles in Beersheba. Joseph is sold by a group of Midianite traders to the Ishmaelites, before his brothers could do so (Gen 37:28).⁴⁷

The book of Genesis presents some difficulties in locating an original homeland in its narratives. Nevertheless, Genesis' future outlook envisions a homeland to be established in the land of Canaan. For the primeval pre-homeland narratives, however, a strong memory of dispersion could be established as guiding the initial contact between the land and its future inhabitants. What is striking is the complete lack of trauma and death resulting from the dispersion, the absence of a military or armed conflict leading to dispersion and the utter lack of a theologized attempt to establish why the land was not completely, inherited or continuously settled in its initial colonization stage.

⁴⁶ Except for the children of Abraham's third wife Keturah, who do not play any role in the narratives.

⁴⁷ For an illuminating discussion of the question of who sold Joseph; see Ron Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams: A Semantic and Literary Analysis of Genesis 37-50* (JSOTSup 385; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 69-79. Also, Yiu-Wing Fung, *Victim and Victimizer*, 98.

6.3.2. Alternatively, the Expansion from a Homeland in Search of Work, in Pursuit of Trade or to further Colonial Ambitions⁴⁸

Genesis contains not only stories of forced expulsion but also of migration for economic reasons, in search of pasture for livestock, for marriage and for religious reasons. One other feature that could be included, because of the nomadic background of the patriarchal narratives, is migration in pursuit of water. Abraham, together with Sarah and Lot, accompanied Terah for an unknown reason from Ur towards the land of Canaan. Abraham then moves on in response to a religious call to finish the journey to Canaan. Later Lot moves to Zoar in search of better pasture for his flocks. Abraham journeyed through the land of Canaan into the Negev (Gen 20:1). Then, for an unknown voluntary reason and for an extended time (Gen 21:34), he journeys into Gerar in the land of the Philistines.

6.3.3. A Collective Memory and Myth about the Homeland, including its Location, History and Achievements

This section looks into the memory that is preserved about the homeland, including the description of its location. Genesis contains two supplementary memories about the location of the homeland in Canaan, one in Gen 10:19 and the other in Gen 15:18.

The homeland is portrayed in mythical proportions as an ideal and spacious place with minimal settlement. The patriarchal narratives do not describe any encounter with a people group called the Canaanites. While it is repeatedly stated that the Canaanites and also the Perizzites dwell in the land (Gen 12:6, 13:7; 15:21; 24:3, 37; 34:30; 50:11) the patriarchs never encounter them. What shall we make of such statements in the light of what Anselm Hagedorn calls their 'absent presence'? Twice, when it was unavoidable, encounters with the people of

⁴⁸ The characterisation employed here by Robin Cohen does not completely correspond in its motivation to the migration stories of the semi-nomadic patriarchal narratives.

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the territory of Canaan are reported. The first case concerns the purchase of a burial ground for Sarah, where Abraham is dealing with the locals at a Hittite city (Gen 23:10). The other case concerns the city of Shechem of the Hivites (Gen 34:2). Genesis 14 reports and emphasizes that Abraham was allied to three Amorites (Gen 14:12, 24).⁴⁹ The Hittites, the Hivites and the Amorites are presented in Gen 15:18-20 as people groups who live in the territory of Canaan but are not Canaanites. The impression is given in the narratives of Genesis of small dotted city-states without any overarching governmental structure. No kings are mentioned in relation to the Canaanite city-states (except the cryptic reference to Melchizedek, king of Salem). In contrast, the tiny city-state of Gerar has a king.

The land of Canaan plays only a vague role in the patriarchal narratives. It is nowhere described as a land flowing with milk and honey, which of course might be due to the recurring famines in the land that continuously drive out the patriarchs.⁵⁰ The land is not described as suffering from famine as a result of a covenantal curse, as all the negative effects of the curse (for example, wild beasts and terror in the land – cf. Lev 26:16-17 ; Deut 32:23-27) are absent. It is noteworthy that both Jeremiah and Ezekiel evoke the image of famine as a judgment for breaking the covenant (cf. Jer 24:10; 27:8-13; 29:17; 34:17; 38:2; Ezek 6:11; 7:15; 12:16).⁵¹ Lands of abundance are known in Genesis,

⁴⁹ In relation to Genesis 14 Claus Westermann makes the point that virtual unanimity exists in the view that Genesis 14 is not part of any of the known Genesis sources due to the difference in the Hebrew in the chapter. For the full discussion, see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 188.

⁵⁰ This creates its own tension of a promised territory that is unable to feed even mobile nomadic herdsmen, much less those in agricultural small holdings. This does raise the question as to how suitable the land is to feed the people; see John H. Walton, *Genesis* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001), 396. See the discussion by Richard A. Freund who suggests that the image of a bountiful land is better interpreted as 'the land which "bleeds" in its bounty.' This would then be a painful exilic view of the land; see Richard A. Freund, "The Land which Bled forth its Bounty: An Exile Image of the Land of Israel," *SJOT* 13, no. 2 (1999): 284-297, esp. 288.

⁵¹ See William H. Shea, "Famine." *ABD* 2:769-773, esp. 772.

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primarily Eden (somewhere in Mesopotamia). The Jordan valley (west of the Jordan) is compared by Lot to the garden of YHWH (Gen 13:10) and also Gerar.⁵² Egypt produced so much food during the period of abundance that it could feed itself during the seven years famine and still sell its grain to its neighbours (Genesis 41).⁵³ It seems that there is no religious judgment associated with the presence or absence of famine. Not even the presence of the 'righteous' Abraham in Canaan can prevent the soil from becoming unproductive. Another major crisis is caused by the flood (a reminder that famine can also be caused by excessive amounts of water) and also, in this case, one righteous individual could not prevent the catastrophe from happening.

The actual collective memory of the land is minimal. The recollection focuses on the ancestral existence as aliens, sojourners, nomads and thereby it emphasises mobility as a mark of the Judahite diasporic existence. In the patriarchal age, Canaan was not able to feed its people nor provide shelter for sojourning strangers, a condition that is mirrored in the repeated barrenness of the chosen matriarchs (Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel). However, active divine intervention produced fertility, something that by analogy can also be expected sometime in the future for the land itself. The overall picture of Canaan is one of peaceful co-existence between the nations in the land and its surrounding neighbours. André Lemaire points out that it is unlikely that the patriarchal tradition regarding Abraham at Hebron and Mamre and Isaac around Beersheba could have originated between 587 BCE and 112 BCE, when this territory was outside Yehud and inhabited mainly by

⁵² For an exclusive deuteronomistic reading see F. V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity* (JSOTSup 361; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 29, who argues that because of the link between Lot's positive view about the Jordan plain and the subsequent destruction of Sodom there, the positive view of Egypt will also incur divine judgment. Therefore, Egypt is a land of temptation. However, the Genesis narratives only mention the fertility of Egypt and do not make negative assessments of the country.

⁵³ Egypt is also compared by Lot to the garden of YHWH (Gen 13:10).

Edomites and the Northern Arabian population.⁵⁴ However, a recollection in the diaspora could account for such a memory in the exilic or post-exilic period.

6.3.4. A Regard of their Ancestral Homeland as their True Ideal Home and the Place to which they or their Descendants would (or should) Eventually Return – when Conditions are Appropriate

This section does not deal with the tension, intrinsic to the diaspora, between viewing the ancestral homeland as the true and ideal home and the delay in the actual physical return to it. The key to unravelling this diaspora mystery is well expressed in the phrase 'when conditions are appropriate.' The ultimate judgment, as to if and when the conditions for a return are right, cannot be dictated from the outside (that is, by those in the homeland or already returned groups) but is judged individually by each diaspora family. Return from the diaspora, and every other kind of a long-distant relocation of a family, is also a financially extremely expensive endeavour, even in later periods when colonisation of barren land was actively encouraged. This individual responsibility resonates well with the patriarchal stories in Genesis, where this diaspora tension is also expressed in the dichotomy between being promised and given the land and the patriarchs' continuous decision to leave the land because it would not feed them.

It is stressed repeatedly throughout the narratives that the land of Canaan is given to the patriarchs and their children. The promise is first expressed to Abraham while he is still in Haran (Gen 12:1-3) and then immediately repeated in Gen 12:7, where the land is promised to Abraham's offspring. After the separation from Lot, YHWH repeats the promise to Abraham and his offspring (Gen 13:14-17). The promise then recurs in the covenantal promise in Gen 15:7 and is repeated to stress that Abraham's offspring is included (Gen 15:13-16). It can also be found in the introduction to the Covenant of Circumcision in Gen 17:8, where

⁵⁴ I presume André Lemaire's argument is about a Yehudite background to the stories: see André Lemaire, "New Aramaic Ostraca," 420.

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Abraham and his offspring's 'everlasting possession' is underlined. The land promise is also repeated by Abraham to his servant (Gen 24:7); by YHWH to Isaac and his offspring (Gen 26:3-4); by Isaac to Jacob (Gen 28:4); in a dream to Jacob and his offspring (Gen 28:13); from YHWH in the blessing at Bethel to Israel and his offspring (Gen 35:12); by Jacob to Joseph (Gen 48:3-4); and finally by Joseph to the sons of Jacob (Gen 50:24).⁵⁵ In a few of these promises there is the ambiguity that the blessing of the offspring will make them so numerous that the whole earth will contain them (cf. Gen 13:16, 22:18; 26:4; 28:14), a blessing that again creates the tension between occupying the land and the diaspora existence abroad. This diasporic existence is not viewed negatively but rather, is the fulfilment of the blessing to make the offspring of the patriarchs as numerous as the stars.

6.3.5. The Development of a Return Movement that gains Collective Approbation

The presence of a return movement among the Babylonian diaspora is assumed by scholars. Furthermore, it is assumed that those in the diaspora would have read the patriarchal narratives as prototypes of their own return.⁵⁶ The prominence of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the late exilic/post-exilic writings is also noted.⁵⁷ There is evidence of a return movement in both the primeval and patriarchal narratives of Genesis but to what degree the return movement gained a collective approbation cannot be established from this ancient text.

The patriarchal narratives contain at least a hint of the presence of a return movement in the passages concerned with the future of Abraham's descendants. However, the overall journeying of characters in

⁵⁵ This last repetition breaks the usual pattern of patriarch to his son, as one would expect Jacob to repeat the promise of land to all his sons. In this final repetition at the very end of the book of Genesis, the reminder instead comes out of the mouth of Joseph, stressing his role as a diaspora hero, in keeping the family alive.

⁵⁶ Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 247-248.

⁵⁷ See for example Isa 41:8-9; 51:1-3; 63:16; Ezek 28:25; 33:24; 37:27.

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the book of Genesis begins in Ur and ends in Egypt. Also, the presence of a return movement depends on the definition used in each particular case. Is Abraham and Sarah's journey to Canaan a return?⁵⁸ Similar to this is the case of Isaac, who is born abroad but then 'returns' to the land.⁵⁹ In any case, all three return to Canaan from their sojourning in Egypt and Gerar, respectively. Both Abraham and Isaac function very much like the father and son of the promise regarding inheriting Canaan; Jacob plays this role less, because he dies outside the land (but is then subsequently returned to it). Abraham returns twice to Canaan, Isaac returns once. Overall, Sarah and Abraham always return to Canaan and both die there. Isaac and Rebekah also return and die there. Leah and Rachel only travel to the land and both are buried in Canaan. Jacob

⁵⁸ Shemaryahu Talmon proposes this; see Shemaryahu Talmon, "'Exile' and 'Restoration'," 113-114.

⁵⁹ That Isaac is not born in Canaan is surmised based on his birth story being sandwiched in between two stories that are located in Gerar and have dealings with Abimelech. However, a careful reading of the text again will indicate the ambiguity between Philistine territory and the territory of Beersheba. Hagar and Ishmael are sent away from Abraham's dwelling and wander in the wilderness of Beersheba (which might indicate Abraham's presence in Beersheba, but Gen 21:22 begins without a journeying description for Abimelech when he speaks to Abraham (Gen 21:22 cf. Gen 26:26 'went to him from Gerar'). Yet the covenant ceremony between Abraham and Abimelech establishes the name of the place as Beersheba (Gen 21:31), from which Abimelech 'returned to the land of the Philistines' (Gen 21:32). only to state two verses later 'and Abraham sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines.' Isaac's account of similar events in Genesis 26 further defines the border territory between the land of the Philistines and the land of Canaan. Isaac departed from Gerar to the valley of Gerar, first to the well at Esek and then to the well at Sitnah – both wells were claimed by Philistine herdsmen. The next well Rehoboth (Gen 26:22) seems to be outside the claimed territory of Gerar and potentially part of the land of Canaan. Isaac announces, 'for now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land' (Gen 26:22b), but then the next verse uses the well-known directive 'he went up' (לַיָּו- *wayya'al*), this time to Beersheba. לַיָּו (*wayya'al*) is the 'usual term to describe journeys from Egypt to Canaan' (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 295), cf. also Gen 13:1, which indicates that he was not yet in Canaan.

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returns to Canaan from living with Laban but moves to Egypt when he is old, yet is buried in Canaan. Joseph and his brothers leave Canaan to return only to bury their father. Genesis ends with Joseph's body awaiting the return from Egypt.

6.3.5.1. Return Movement in the Primeval History

Humankind was driven out of Eden and a return was not anticipated. For humanity, a return either to Eden or to the innocent state (pre-fall) of human life is not anticipated. Similarly, Cain was driven from the land and settled in the land of Nod, never to return to the first settlement closer to the Garden.

Noah, whose name means 'rest', symbolises the nature of the diaspora community in Babylon – he was chosen to preserve the people and give them rest for a time. The 'righteous' (one in the case of Noah, many in the case of the reformed *golah*) are gathered from the neighbouring nations, separated from them and thus preserved. Furthermore, the living creatures and birds experience the same ingathering the Eden account describes. Immediately after the covenant with Noah, genealogical information is given about the sons of Noah. 'These three were the sons of Noah and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed' (Gen 9:19). This effectively reverses the ingathering that has just happened without any indication that sin led to the dispersion.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ For a detailed discussion see Carol M. Kaminski, *From Noah to Israel: Realization of the Primeval Blessing After the Flood* (JSOTSup 413; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 141-142. Kaminski does not equate scattering with filling the earth and argues that the best translation of 6pn (*nephets*) and 6wp (*puvts*) is 'scattering' because 'scattering' is associated with divine judgment. She also argues against the view that the primeval blessing of filling the earth is fulfilled in the Table of Nations in Gen 10:1-32. According to her, these verses are 'clearly in the process of being realized.' Its fulfilment will advance through the Shemite genealogy and fulfil itself sometime in the future. However, it seems best not to overemphasize one of the two notions of scattering as judgment against filling the earth but hold both in their rightful tension. The same balancing view is expressed by Jörn Kiefer in his extensive linguistic study on

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The flood is immediately followed by the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. Its location prior to the Babel story indicates again that global habitation is divinely willed. This is stressed through the repetition of the neutral description that the earth was populated from Noah's sons (Gen 10:32).

After the flood dispersion continues, yet humanity does not comply with the Creator's command to spread and populate the whole earth. The people conceive a plan to gather in the land of Shinar and build a city and a tower. God views this as being in opposition to his plans for global earth inhabitation and adds the confusion of languages to scatter the people over the earth. Here it is also noteworthy that the expected sin-exile-repentance-return/restoration pattern is actually reversed - the sin of the people led to ingathering, while God's positive action led to scattering.⁶¹

In summary, Genesis 1-11 does not portray the presence of a return movement to the place of origin or to a promised land but rather describes the active and ongoing command to fill the earth and settle throughout it. The cherubim and the flaming sword both guard against any possibility of return to humanity's original settlement in Eden, thus making a return impossible, had Adam and Eve even harboured such a hope. A further reference in Genesis to filling the earth is found in Gen 47:27 and refers to Israel settling in the land of Goshen in Egypt. Exod 1:7 reports that God's ultimate aim of increasing the Israelite population and their filling the land is finally achieved. However, this did not happen in the land of Canaan but in Egypt.⁶²

the biblical and variant second-temple period uses of vocabulary of exile and diaspora; see Jörn Kiefer, *Exil und Diaspora*, 603.

⁶¹ See also James McKeown, *Genesis*, 72. For a reading that sees the Tower of Babel narrative being primarily about diversification of culture through dispersion; see Theodore Hiebert, "The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures," *JBL* 126, no. 1 (2007): 29–58.

⁶² One question needs to be addressed in view of the interplay between the Pentateuch and the diaspora. Is Egypt Egypt? Egypt is Egypt but also functions as a representative for every land of exile and dispersion. J. G. McConville made a similar point when discussing interrelated descriptions of foreign empires which are used in the biblical literature with a typology possibility inherent to

6.3.5.2. Return Movement in the Patriarchal Narratives

*Abraham*⁶³

Abraham's father Terah plans to migrate to the land of Canaan but for an unknown reason the family settles in Haran in the province of Aram. The call to settle in Canaan⁶⁴ reaches Abraham in Haran and consequently he takes his family and belongings into the land. Yet no promise is given to Abraham to inherit this land. He arrives and passes through the land and at Shechem has a theophany, where YHWH clarifies his thoughts on the inheritance of the land: 'to your offspring I will give this land' (Gen 12:7).⁶⁵ The land is not given to Abraham directly; rather, the inheritance and ownership of the land is wrapped in future language. Genesis 15:7 promises to Abraham, as part of a covenantal ceremony, 'to give you this land to possess.' This is immediately defined as becoming a reality only after the exile of his offspring for a four hundred year period. The ceremony ends with a shift of land possession away from Abraham to include only his descendants:

to your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites. (Gen 15:18-20)

the language and imagery employed; see J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power*, 29.

⁶³ Abraham originated in the great ancient city of Ur of the Chaldeans but his tribal background was Aramean, as were the matriarchs (cf. Gen 25:20; 28:5) and all their descendants. This is recalled in Deut 26:5, 'and you shall make response before the LORD your God, "A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in numbers, and there he became a nation".' Deuteronomy merges the essence of Abraham and Jacob's time in Egypt into the foundational story of the nation.

⁶⁴ It is noteworthy that YHWH does not use the title 'land of Canaan' in his promise.

⁶⁵ This is repeated in Gen 13:15, 15:18, 17:8, 24:7, 26:3, 28:13, 35:12, 48:4.

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God's covenant with Abraham also projects the ownership, possession and even the return to the land to some unspecific time in the future.⁶⁶ Another aspect that stresses the future nature of the promise is the increase in size of territory (compared to Gen 10:19-20). It describes not only the land of Canaan but the whole coastal region up to the Euphrates in northern Aram. Abraham continues afterwards to move southwards through the land. A famine drives him and his belongings out of the land into Egypt, to sojourn there. Abraham then returns through the Negev back into Canaan. Even though Abraham returns to the land, it is already established that the land is not his and that he is also a stranger and sojourner in the land (Gen 23:4).

Sometime later Abraham journeys south again and sojourns in Gerar in the land of the Philistines, he makes a trip to the land of Moriah and then returns to Beersheba. Yet he stays inside the borders of the given land. Abraham makes one move towards claiming the land, when buying the cave as a burial ground for Sarah in Machpelah.

Isaac

Isaac proves to be the exception. Abraham stresses twice (Gen 24:6, 8) that he does not want Isaac to return to Haran. He does return twice from Gerar, where he was born, to Canaan but because of the uncertainty as to whether Gerar is part of the promised territory it is difficult to establish if this should be counted as a return. He would have left for Egypt if a divine visitation had not prevented him from doing so. And yet he lives, like his father, as a *ger* (*ger* - sojourner) in the land. His special status can best be explained as him being 'the son of promise.'

⁶⁶ See also Terence E. Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," 446-447. See also E. Theodore Mullen Jr.'s remark, 'most significant, from the perspective of the author(s) of this text and its promise, that the land is pledged *not* to the generation of the narrative present, but rather to those who would be its descendants' (E. Theodore Mullen Jr., *Ethnic Myths and Pentateuchal Foundations*, 130, 137.)

Jacob

Jacob, also known as Israel, was born in Canaan.⁶⁷ For some Jacob is a symbol of the whole history of Israel, a character who is continuously struggles with exile and return.⁶⁸ He goes into a voluntary exile when fleeing from Esau's wrath (Gen 27:42-45), yet at the same time he sets out on an extended wife-finding-mission to Abraham's kin (Gen 27:46-28:5). Jacob's journeying to find a wife indicates that Canaan, for him, is not yet home. At the same time, his intention to return with his wife creates ambiguity as to where his home is. For Jacob, Canaan remains a place of diaspora existence, thus he is still a *ger* (*ger*) in the land. Homeland is still connected to the ancestral family's place of dwelling. Prior to departing from the land (Gen 28:13-15) a promise is given that he shall return to Bethel and he and his descendants shall inherit the land.⁶⁹ After many years, he returns to Canaan but not without destroying the ancestral family link and making it impossible for his own children to achieve endogamous marriage.⁷⁰ McKeown points out that Jacob does not return, as expected, directly to Bethel but first settles east of the land in Succoth for some time (Gen 33:17). He then moves again but stops short of Bethel and settles at Shechem among the Hivites (Gen 33:18). Here Jacob tries to create a new homeland for his family and buys a piece of land for the family to settle on (Gen 33:19).

⁶⁷ For an interpretation of the Jacob tradition in Deutero-Isaiah of a community in exile; see Meira Polliack, "Deutero-Isaiah's Typological Use," 72-110.

⁶⁸ Robert P. Carroll, "Exile! What Exile?," 63.

⁶⁹ See also Alexander Rofé's observation that 'undoubtedly, there are passages in the patriarchal stories where the promise of the Land to the Patriarchs is secondary; cases in point are Gen 22:15-18; 28:13-14 (but not 15!); even in Deuteronomy in which the promise is so central, it occasionally occurs in interpolated passages - Deut 19:8-9; 26:3-4.' See Alexander Rofé, "An Enquiry into the Betrothal of Rebekah," 32.

⁷⁰ From now on the patriarchs face a dilemma as to how the family can increase in number and at the same time follow the patriarch Abraham's command not to intermarry with the people of the land (cf. Gen 24:3-4 and Rebekah's reminder to Isaac 27:46). See also Alexander Rofé, "An Enquiry into the Betrothal of Rebekah," 27-39.

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This is in direct contrast to Abraham, who bought a piece of land for family burials but not to live on. Finally, a divine encounter prompts Jacob to finish his return journey, leave his plot of land and settle in Bethel (Gen. 35:1-7).⁷¹ Yet Bethel never becomes home; the sojourning of Jacob/Israel continues and is re-emphasised in the narratives (cf. 35:21; 35:27; 37:1).

After many years in the land, the narratives end with Jacob experiencing another voluntary 'exile' and migration that again saves his life – this time to Egypt, where he dies. Jacob stays a total of seventeen years in Egypt (Gen 47:28), five years during the famine but also an additional twelve years after the famine had ended (Gen 45:6). These last twelve years of his life especially challenge the perspective that Jacob's life exemplifies return. He was seemingly quite happy to stay in Egypt, where his family cared for him. Only then is he gathered to his people (Gen 49:33) and his body is returned in an Egyptian procession to be buried in the ancestral grave in Mamre. But was this the return anticipated in YHWH's promise in Gen 46:4? YHWH's promise to Jacob contains three main elements: first, YHWH's presence with Jacob in Egypt; secondly, his return to the land he left; and thirdly, that Joseph will be present when he dies ('Joseph's hand shall close your eyes'). The promise is not fulfilled in that order: the first and third elements are both fulfilled but the central return motif did not materialise in Jacob's lifetime. Jacob is the last character in Genesis to receive the direct promise of return from YHWH. The promise of return is passed on in the family first from Jacob to Joseph (Gen 48:21) and subsequently from Joseph to his brothers (Gen 50:22-24). The passing on of the return promise in the family indicates that the fulfilment of the promise is not found in the return of the embalmed body of Jacob in Gen 50:9-14. More importantly, Gen 50:12 clarifies that the return of Jacob's body was the fulfilment of Jacob's death-bed wish and his command to his children (Gen 47:29-31; 49:29-32). The return promise is kept alive within the family and passed from one generation to the next; it awaits fulfilment at the end of Genesis. The return promise in Genesis is

⁷¹ James McKeown, *Genesis*, 157-161.

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interpreted as a collective promise given not only to an individual, Jacob but through him to his whole family.

Joseph

Joseph, born in Canaan, is sold into slavery in Egypt. YHWH does not promise Joseph directly that he will return to his homeland; rather, Jacob passes the unfulfilled promise of his own return on to Joseph to be fulfilled sometime in the future (Gen 48:21). He only returns to bury his father Jacob in Mamre. The mourning for Jacob takes place 'east of the Jordan' where the Egyptian party remains while Joseph and his brothers travel to Mamre to bury their father (Gen 50:12). After the burial, Joseph and his brothers return to Egypt, where Joseph dies.⁷² His body is then embalmed and awaits return 'to the land that God [he] swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob' (Gen. 50:24) in the final chapter of Genesis.⁷³

The Joseph story, though a diaspora novella, includes an implicit warning about losing one's identity in the dispersion.⁷⁴ Before Joseph comes to interpret the dream of Pharaoh, Gen 41:14 reports that he shaves himself and changes his clothes. Fried highlights that the shaving of the beard transforms Joseph outwardly into an Egyptian.⁷⁵ Subsequently, Joseph is officially renamed by Pharaoh, Zephenath-paneah and is married into a prominent Egyptian priestly family (Gen 41:45). He

⁷² See also Andreas Kunz, "Ägypten in der Perspektive Israels am Beispiel der Josephsgeschichte (Gen 37-50)," *BZ* 47, no. 2 (2003): 206-229, esp. 208, where he concludes that nowhere in the Joseph story is the theme of return developed.

⁷³ Joseph's bones are buried in Shechem (Josh 24:32).

⁷⁴ A more cautious reading is preferable to that of Albert de Pury and Thomas C. Römer, "Terres d'exil et terres d'accueil. Quelques réflexions sur le judaïsme postexilique face à la Perse et à l'Égypte," *Transeu* 9 (1995): 25-34, esp. 34, where they view the character of Joseph as 'un véritable plaidoyer pour la cohabitation entre Juifs et Égyptiens.'

⁷⁵ Lisbeth S. Fried, "Why did Joseph Shave?," *BAR* 33, no. 4 (2007): 36-41, 74, esp. 37.

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appears to his brothers as a typical Egyptian official. He uses a translator to talk to them (Gen 42:23) and does not share the table with them – as Egyptians do not eat with shepherds (Gen 46:32). Joseph also places a silver cup in his brother's bag and hints that he practised divination to find out the guilty party (Gen 44:15).⁷⁶ After Jacob's death, the Canaanites do not notice a difference between the leading mourners and the general Egyptian mourners who were present at the threshing floor of Atad when Jacob's dead body was returned to Canaan (Gen 50:11). This indicates that Joseph has completely adapted to Egyptian culture and manners.⁷⁷ The same can be seen in Joseph's embalming of his father Jacob.⁷⁸ Joseph's troubled relationship with his own past can also be seen in the naming of his son Manasseh during the period of plentiful harvest. His name is chosen to indicate that 'God has made me forget all my hardship *and all my father's house*' (Gen 41:51 – emphasis mine).⁷⁹ Following these remarks, the question remains as to whether Joseph will forget his father's house. Pirson points out that as second-

⁷⁶ Ron Pirson, *Lord of the Dreams*, 141, argues that Joseph's 'divine aspirations' let him cross the line of acceptable ancestral custom, especially in relation to his religious practice. There are some passages (Gen 42:25 cf. v.28, cf. also 43:23; 44:16; 41:38) 'in which Joseph makes other people think that God has done something to them, whereas it was actually Joseph himself who had done so.'

⁷⁷ For a similar point, see F. V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map*, 37.

⁷⁸ Pnina Galpaz-Feller attributes the embalming to Joseph's adoption of Egyptian practice; she also points out that the biblical text does not contain any religious Egyptian overtones. The body is not embalmed by the religious embalmers of the Egyptian cult but only by ordinary physicians. See Pnina Galpaz-Feller, "'And the physicians embalmed him' (Gen 50,2)," *ZAW* 118, no. 2 (2006): 209-217. Joshua Berman highlights the delicate game that Joseph needs to play in order to both appeal to the Egyptian moral and social norms and his own different cultural heritage; see Joshua Berman, "Identity Politics and the Burial of Jacob (Genesis 50:1-14)," *CBQ* 68, no. 1 (2006): 11-31, esp. 23-26.

⁷⁹ Ron Pirson suggests that the explanation that Joseph gives regarding Manasseh's name highlights that he attributes his neglect of his father's house to YHWH. See Ron Pirson, *Lord of the Dreams*, 92.

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in-command, Joseph has plenty of time and all necessary means to try to contact his family in Canaan, something he never does.⁸⁰

Assimilation into local culture is a danger for the individual. But it is less of a threat for a sizeable community.⁸¹ The community may retain the common cultural and religious manners of the forefathers, a point illustrated in Joseph's encounter with his brothers, where he twice uses the enforcing formula 'by the life of Pharaoh' (Gen 42:15, 16), before on the third day, changing to 'for I fear God' (Gen 42:18).⁸² Thus, it should be emphasized that Joseph only realizes the deeper meaning of his childhood visions when he is re-unified with the community of his brothers.

The narrative also points to the growing rift between Pharaoh and his former second-in-command from the first appearance of Joseph's brothers. It is noted that the Egyptians heard about it and then that 'the household of Pharaoh heard it' (Gen 45:2). After Jacob's death Joseph does not approach Pharaoh directly, as he had done on numerous occasions before; rather, his sliding from grace is illustrated by the fact that he approaches the household of Pharaoh for his request to be brought to the attention of the Pharaoh (Gen 50:4). At this stage he is not, as he boasted to his brothers, 'a father to Pharaoh' and 'ruler over all the land of Egypt' (Gen 45:8).

Joseph's brothers

Joseph's brothers (without Benjamin) go down to Egypt during the time when there was a famine both in Canaan and in Egypt, to buy grain (Gen

⁸⁰ Ron Pirson, *Lord of the Dreams*, 92.

⁸¹ For an negative assessment of Joseph as the assimilator and anti-hero; see Aaron Wildavsky, *Assimilation versus Separation: Joseph the Administrator and the Politics of Religion in Biblical Israel* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1993); or Aaron Wildavsky, "Survival Must not be Gained through Sin: The Moral of the Joseph Stories Prefigured through Judah and Tamar," *JOT 62* (1994): 37-48.

⁸² Ron Pirson, *Lord of the Dreams*, 97, also remarks on these verses that Joseph meeting his brothers brought about some changes in him.

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42:4). They return with grain. Once their supply is finished, they return to Egypt, this time with Benjamin. This time Joseph reveals himself and invites the family to immigrate. The third trip to Egypt is with their father Jacob, their families and all their flocks and herds. The families of Joseph's brothers never return to the land, while Joseph's brothers accompany Joseph back to the land to bury their father.⁸³

6.3.5.3. Conclusion

The primeval story portrays YHWH as the provider of a borderless earth for human habitation. The filling of the earth is portrayed as the explicit wish of YHWH. This is conveyed through the lack of any return ideology to the places of original settlement. The garden of Eden would invite itself to be the prime location for the conceptualisation of a return motif, yet there is no such motif in the text. The patriarchal narratives, not as a contrast but as a supplement to the primeval story, continue to be ambivalent about the relationship between the land of Canaan and the chosen seed who will inherit and settle in it. The patriarchal presence in the land, in synthesis with the nomadic aspect of the primeval story, begins with sojourning outside the land and ends with sojourning outside the land (this is also true for the whole of the Pentateuch). The relationship between the promised land and the people is repeatedly portrayed as a future construct. This is of psychological importance as it helps to root the people in a 'homeland of imagination', a homeland that does not require physical return.

To summarize my findings, there is no physical return movement traceable in the book of Genesis.⁸⁴ The return movement is always a future

⁸³ Andreas Kunz, "Ägypten in der Perspektive Israels," 227. Kunz points out that Gen 50:8 reports that during Jacob's burial 'their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen.' This information adds nothing to the narrative; therefore, he suggests interpreting it as a deliberately contrasting image to the exodus, in which children, herds and flocks accompany Israel on their departure.

⁸⁴ The documents found in the Jedaniah Archive (COS 3.46-5) from Elephantine establish a link between the garrison and the homeland but never mention,

construct. Assuming a redaction of Genesis was influenced by a concern for the Babylonian diaspora, it can only mean that, for the editors of the Genesis narratives, the physical return was projected to occur sometime in the future.

6.3.6. A strong Ethnic Group Consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a Sense of Distinctiveness, a Common History and the Belief in a Common Fate

From the beginning of Genesis, the use of ethnic categories seems to be a rather artificial endeavour. Even though ethnicity is not primarily a modern concept, Genesis does not follow the assumed pattern, 'our ancestors arrived in this land and established us as the P.N. [name of people group].' Abraham and his descendants never settle in the land, they are never called or described as a tribal group or nation and no ethnic distinction is applied to them over and against other people groups they encounter. They always remain the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The focus is not on the ethnic link between members of the tribe of Abraham, since his descendants continuously

or hint at, any idea of return ideology. The same seems true of the 'Aramaic Text in Demotic Script' (COS 1.99) which is linked to the Aramean garrison in Syene, where the narrator recalls his dream about his youth in the land of Rash (X.8-13). He further prays for personal salvation (VI.1-12), laments the destruction of the land of Rash (V.1-11) and prays for the destruction of their Kassite and Elamite enemies (X.16-20), yet he never mentions the idea or the hope of a return to the ancestral homeland. A copy of the diaspora novella, *The Words of Ahiqar*, was also found at Elephantine. Ahiqar is sent by the Assyrian king Sennacherib to Egypt to answer Pharaoh's wisdom challenge and return those Assyrians who fled because of the threat of Egyptian taxation. Ahiqar succeeds and returns his fellow country men (VI:39-41). Among the surviving fragments of the Aramaic text found at Elephantine, the Egyptian episode was not found; see James M. Lindenberger, "Ahiqar." *OTS* 2:479-507, esp. 498. For a discussion of both, see Bezalel Porten, "Settlement of the Jews at Elephantine and the Arameans at Syene," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 451-470.

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intermarry with people of other ethnic groups or marry without any ethnic label given (especially after the link to Haran is broken).⁸⁵

On the other hand, the beginning of the nation in Genesis is linked to Abraham, who has eight sons (six by Keturah, one by Hagar and one by Sarah), yet his descendants do not immediately develop into a great nation, as the ancestry is limited to the son with whom YHWH promises to establish a covenant (Gen 17:19). This indicates that ethnicity is subordinated to the covenant and covenant obedience. The question needs to be asked if Abraham should be, or is, considered to be the father of the nation, or at least an initial rallying point. Jacob was renamed Israel and thus may be considered the founding father of the nation.⁸⁶ Abraham has eight sons but importance is only attached to Isaac. Jacob has twelve sons, yet none of them is excluded from the line of promise; even so, as with Abraham, the majority are not born to his primary wives. The Hebrew Bible (in its canonical form and excluding Genesis) has 41 references to Abraham and 154 references to Jacob. Yet, the promise of nationhood is centred on Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; also Genesis 15) but the name for the nation is derived from Jacob. At the same time, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and their wives) are all of pure Aramean descendants and only Jacob breaks this link (Genesis 31) and is then subsequently renamed Israel. Deuteronomy 26:5 stresses that Jacob was the 'wandering Aramean' who left for Egypt to become a great nation.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of intermarriages and the question whether Isaac and Jacob should marry endogamously; see 6.3.7.5 of this study.

⁸⁶ In her study of Deutero-Isaiah Meira Polliack makes the point, that Israel's national renewal is evoked through the shared exilic experience of Jacob; see Meira Polliack, "Deutero-Isaiah's Typological Use," 80.

6.3.7. A Troubled Relationship with Host Societies, suggesting a Lack of Acceptance at the least or the Possibility that another Calamity might befall the Group

As a diaspora document Genesis, does not provide evidence for tensions in the relationship between the assumed editors, the Babylonian diaspora community and their host society, as neither community features in the retelling of the past in Genesis, although the king of Babylon is mentioned in relation to the conflict that led to Lot's captivity (Gen 14:1). The guiding investigation focuses instead on the relationship conflicts between peoples in Genesis, between the outsider (the patriarchs as representatives of the nation) and their different host-countries (Canaan, Philistine, Edom and Egypt, as representatives of their host society). An initial comment on interrelationship conflict in Genesis should mention the obvious: that prior to the curse of Canaan in Gen 9:25-27, the primeval history does not know of any conflicts between people groups. Pre-flood violence on an individual level increases (Gen 6:11, 13) but humanity is not yet narrated as being divided into differing tribes and peoples (Gen 11:2).

6.3.7.1. Conflict in Canaan?

The land of Canaan is surprisingly peaceful and lacks continuous conflicts. This is unexpected because the guiding assumption for future settlement in Canaan is that once the iniquities of the Amorites/Canaanites are fulfilled, they will be expelled from the land in order that Abraham's descendants may inherit it (Gen 15:16; cf. Lev 18:24-27; Deut 9:4-5). A superficial reading of Gen 15:16 might indicate that the Canaanites are already quite corrupt and YHWH only waits for them to reach a higher level of corruption. On the other hand, such an interpretation, in the exilic period, might indicate that in the patriarchal past, the Canaanites were not very corrupt. Otherwise, YHWH's action in expelling the Northern Kingdom and subsequently Judah does seem to

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be extraordinarily harsh, in contrast to the patience he had with the Canaanites.⁸⁷

There are only two incidents in Genesis that shed some light on the moral behaviour of the population inhabiting Canaan. Ephron the Hittite sells Abraham a burial site for an exorbitant price (Genesis 23). Abraham is charged 400 shekels, compared to other biblical land deals (Jeremiah pays 17 shekels for a field and Omri 6000 for the land on which he build Samaria).⁸⁸ Yet this purchase does not seem to have impoverished Abraham at all and perhaps he was charged more because he simply was a rich man (something not unknown when one is perceived as a rich foreigner). Had Abraham responded to the invitation to haggle the price, the final price would have been considerably lower but Abraham refused to and paid the asking price. It must also be noted that the narrative does not record any explicit condemnation of such an action (though culturally it might have been implicit for the ancient readers). Jacob also purchased a field near Shechem for 100 hfycq (*qesita* - Gen 33:19) from the sons of Hamor. Unfortunately, the value of the *qesita* is not known, though Job 42:11 suggests that it was of a higher value than the shekel.⁸⁹ In both cases, the relationship between the local population and the patriarch depends on the interpretation of the price charged for the land.

⁸⁷ Christoph Levin points out that there are four clear examples of YHWH's righteousness: the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 19:25; the corruption that led to the flood in Gen 6:7; the divine death-threat against Abimelech in Gen 20:7; and the guilt of Joseph's brother exemplified in Genesis 39. The last case examples breaks out of the previous pattern of guilt, through which YHWH establishes his righteousness, because he is not bound by human behaviour but can turn evil into something good; see Christoph Levin, "Gerechtigkeit Gottes in der Genesis," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2001), 347-357, esp. 357.

⁸⁸ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 375.

⁸⁹ See Gordon J Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 300-301.

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The other case is the condemned defiling of Jacob's daughter Dinah by Shechem,⁹⁰ the son of Hamor the Hivite.⁹¹ Yet her unfortunate case is contrasted with, and silenced by, the extraordinarily violent murder of the people of the city by her brothers Simeon and Levi (Gen 34). Only through divine intervention were Jacob's family rescued: 'a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob' (Gen 35:5). The use of the phrase *bqly ynb* (*bene Yaaqob* – sons of Jacob) might indicate that the Hivites were able to distinguish between offenders and innocent family members – something that was alien to Simeon and Levi.⁹² Beyond these two

⁹⁰ Lyn M. Bechtel questions whether this narrative portrays Shechem as raping Dinah. Based on the absence of a specific Hebrew word for rape, the key linguistic markers are compared to other biblical narratives where similar words are used (e.g. Deut. 22:28-29). She suggests that the key concept is humiliation and that the issue is about group boundaries. See Lyn M. Bechtel, "What if Dinah is not Raped? (Genesis 34)," *JSOT* 62 (1994): 19-36, esp. 36. See also Ron Pirson, *Lord of the Dreams*, 22-25, and Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, "Tipping the Balance: Sternberg's Reader and the Rape of Dinah," *JBL* 110, no. 2 (1991): 193-211, esp. 200, who also questions if Dinah actually was detained. Yael Shemesh argues strongly for rape as the crime, see Yael Shemesh, "Rape is Rape is Rape: The Story of Dinah and Shechem (Genesis 34)," *ZAW* 119, no. 1 (2007): 2-21. For the Abduction Marriage Theory, see, Joseph Fleishman, "Shechem and Dinah – in the Light of Non-Biblical and Biblical Sources," *ZAW* 116, no. 1 (2004): 12–32. For an engaging treatment of the character of Shechem see Caroline Blyth, "Redeemed by His Love? The Characterization of Shechem in Genesis 34," *JSOT* 33, no. 1 (2008): 3-18.

⁹¹ Yairah Amit thinks that the background of Shechem as a Hivite is a hidden polemic against the Samaritans in the Second Temple Period; see Yairah Amit, "Epoch and Genre: The Sixth Century and the Growth of Hidden Polemics," 147. However, this seems highly unlikely reading as the Hivites are not portrayed negatively here.

⁹² For Jacob's curse on them, see Gen 49:7. See also Joseph Fleishman, "Towards Understanding the Legal Significance of Jacob's Statement 'I will divide them in Jacob, I will scatter them in Israel' (Gen 49,7b)," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2001), 541-559.

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individual cases, there is no indication of the corruption of the Canaanite tribes in Genesis. Not even the curse of Noah on his grandson Canaan indicates the total corruption of his descendants, as his curse only includes servitude to his brothers (Gen 9:25-27), not annihilation. Genesis 48:22 reports in passing that Jacob acquired by force a piece of land he gives as an inheritance to Joseph but unfortunately, nothing more is known about the incident.

Other positive examples of the relationship between a patriarch and the inhabitants of Canaan must be mentioned. Genesis 14:13 states that Mamre the Amorite, his brother Eshcol and Aner, were allies of Abraham. These three Amorites were not just passive allies of Abraham 'the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre.' They were also actively engaged in Abraham's victory over the four empires and Abraham stresses that these three get their share of the booty (Gen 14:24). There is also the positive example of a Canaanite religious priest – Melchizedek, king of Salem, who meets the returning war hero Abraham with bread and wine and blesses him. This highlights the fact that *El Elyon* was worshipped in Jerusalem by this priest-king, to whom Abraham, acknowledging his superiority, pays a tithe.

6.3.7.2. Conflict with Egypt?

Abraham and Sarah's visit to Egypt is based on a relationship conflict but this conflict is not so much a conflict as an assumption by Abraham and is thus the background of the visit in Gen 12:10-20. Abraham seems to distinguish between the land as a place of refugees and the Egyptian administration, which does not oppose him sojourning in their territory. Yet, his attitude toward the Egyptians is coloured by negative moral and racial stereotypes and he predicts that he will be murdered on account of his beautiful wife (as the Egyptian's code of moral behaviour prohibits adultery but, surprisingly 'sanctions' murder to obtain someone's wife).⁹³ Subsequently, Sarah is taken into the palace harem and Abraham is treated very well on her account (Gen 12:16). In relation to

⁹³ Contra F. V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map*, 31, who concludes that 'the first instances of Egypt in the Abraham cycle thus

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Sarah's fate in Pharaoh's house, this text remains ambiguous. The narrator mentions that Abimelech did not touch her (Gen 20:6).⁹⁴ The next surprise comes when YHWH afflicts Pharaoh with great plagues on Sarah's account and the wise Pharaoh is able to know, via a non-narrated medium, that Abraham lied to him. Abraham's action results in his expulsion from Egypt (rather than him being killed for his crime), yet without any penalty or punishment and not even any loss of the belongings he received as a 'bride price' for Sarah (Gen 12:20). This episode prompts the question as to who really knows YHWH and his moral requirements. It also contains a reassuring message for those whose corrupt actions are found out (either a deceitful Abraham or the Judahite diaspora, guilty of breaking the covenant and therefore exiled

portray Egypt as a dangerous place that one enters and leaves quickly, but which promises riches at the cost of deception.' It is better, however, to view Abraham's cross-cultural expertise of Egyptian society with caution. A reading of the narratives treating the subject of the benevolent foreign rulers in Genesis (Abraham and the Egyptian Pharaoh – Gen 12:10-20; Abraham and Abimelech – Gen 20:1-18; Isaac and Abimelech – Gen 26:6-26, 26-31; Joseph/Jacob and another Egyptian Pharaoh – Genesis 39-50) highlights the following points: (1) these foreign rulers in the narrative succession are all portrayed increasingly positively and are full of moral integrity, spiritual insights (even into the ways of YHWH – Gen 26:28-29) and a general benevolence and concern for all people in their kingdom (not just their own national subjects). (2) all these encounters ridicule the racial, moral and spiritual judgment of Abraham and Isaac's stereotypes of foreigners. In doing so, they open the way for the migration of the patriarchal family to Egypt. This theme of the foreign ruler is further developed in the Second Temple literature of the Hellenistic and Roman period; see Terence L. Donaldson, "Royal Sympathizers in Jewish Narrative," *JSP* 16, no. 1 (2006): 41-59.

⁹⁴ For a recent discussion on this subject and the conclusion that Pharaoh did, indeed, touch Sarah; see Yitzhak Peleg, "Was the Ancestress of Israel in Danger? Did Pharaoh touch (געט) Sarai?," *ZAW* 118, no. 2 (2006): 197–208.

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by YHWH to a foreign land).⁹⁵ The covenant promise of YHWH stands even when faced with such moral ignorance.⁹⁶

Joseph arrives in Egypt as a slave but rises to become second-in-command to the Pharaoh in Egypt as a result of his interpretation of the dream in which YHWH showed Pharaoh 'what he is about to do' (Gen 41:28).⁹⁷ The Egyptians, both the officials and the Pharaoh, are portrayed as wise and concerned about the welfare of their people in the way they respond immediately to future food crises (Gen 41:37). They are open, tolerant and non-hostile to a foreigner and former slave who becomes vice-ruler. Even so, Egyptian cultic rules prohibit table fellowship with certain groups (Gen 43:32).⁹⁸ Pharaoh himself pronounces 'enthusiastically' a royal verdict that gives Jacob and his family permission to settle/sojourn in Egypt:⁹⁹

settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able among them, put them in charge of my livestock. (Gen 47:6)

⁹⁵ Genesis stresses the fact that YHWH is with Abraham (Gen 21:22), Ishmael (Gen 21:20), Isaac (Gen 26:3, 24, 28), Jacob (Gen 28:15), and Joseph (Gen 39:2, 3, 21, 23) – but these statements say nothing about their moral qualities and whether the ancestors merit in any way the divine presence with them; similarly, Yiu-Wing Fung, *Victim and Victimizer*, 14.

⁹⁶ Nina Rulon-Miller, "Hagar: A Woman with an Attitude," in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives* (ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 257; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 60-89, esp. 67.

⁹⁷ Mark G. Brett made the point that in the Persian period the character of Joseph would be seen as a negative and suspicious representation of the Persian monarchy because he makes 'extravagant claims to divine wisdom (Gen. 41.39, cf. 41.8) and providence (50.20) while expropriating property (Gen. 47).' See Mark G. Brett, "Reading the Bible in the Context," 54. Similarly, Yiu-Wing Fung, *Victim and Victimizer*, 198-206.

⁹⁸ See also Albert de Pury and Thomas C. Römer, "Terres d'exil et terres d'accueil. Quelques réflexions sur le judaïsme postexilique face à la Perse et à l'Égypte," 34 where they highlight the irony that the Egyptians would not want table fellowship with Jews (and not the other way around).

⁹⁹ Joshua Berman, "Identity Politics and the Burial of Jacob," 17.

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Two more unique items are preserved from the private audience between Pharaoh and the patriarch Jacob. There is Pharaoh's graceful, intimate and respectful inquiry about the age of Jacob, giving insights into the portrayal of the all-powerful Egyptian ruler as an honourable man full of integrity, who takes the time to honour a man of great age. Twice in this encounter the patriarch blesses Pharaoh, on arrival and also on departure (Gen 47:7, 10). The only other person to be blessed twice by Jacob is Joseph (Gen 48:15-16; 49:23-26). The Egyptians also feature prominently in the account of the burial of Jacob in Mamre, or as Wenham puts it, 'the grandest state funeral recorded in the Bible.'¹⁰⁰ The Egyptians weep for seventy days (Gen 49:33) and the burial procession included 'all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt' (Gen 50:7).¹⁰¹

One area where the conflict is apparent is in the relationship between Sarah and her Egyptian servant Hagar.¹⁰² It also needs to be remembered that Abraham had already acquired servants (literally, *vphn*

¹⁰⁰ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 488.

¹⁰¹ A certain ambiguity remains in the text as to whether Joseph and his brothers were really free in Egypt. Joseph, when asking permission to bury his father, announces his pre-burial plan that he will return (Gen 50:5), which might potentially be read as informing his employee about the period of his leave from work. More weight must be placed on Joseph's own statement that YHWH will visit them and bring them out of Egypt and he requests his bones to be taken with them (Gen 50:24-25).

¹⁰² Irmtraud Fischer points out that unreflected gender-specific interpretations tend to be sympathetic to the action of the male patriarch, while a similar action by a female matriarch does not receive the same exegetical endorsement. The conflict between the brothers Jacob and Esau is a foreshadowing of the conflict between rival nations, while the conflict between Sarah and Hagar is the result of female infighting. In recognition of the matriarchs' similar struggle to fulfil YHWH's promises, she suggests referring to these narratives as *Erzeltern-Erzählungen* (arch-parent narratives). For a detailed discussion, see Irmtraud Fischer, "Das Geschlecht als Exegetisches Kriterium zu einer Gender-Fairen Interpretation der Erzeltern-Erzählungen," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2001), 135-152.

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(*hanephesh*) - the people) in Haran (Gen 12:5), yet the first time female servants are explicitly mentioned is during Abraham's first stay in Egypt (Gen 12:16).¹⁰³ Thus, it seems an unusual choice for Sarah to suggest the Egyptian Hagar as a surrogate mother when, potentially among the servants, were female Haranians who, in the patriarchal narratives, are the prime choice of 'offspring providers.' Every time Hagar is reintroduced, she is always 'the Egyptian.'¹⁰⁴ Her description with an ethnic marker is different from the way Rachel's servant Bilhah (Gen 30:4) and Leah's servant Zilpah (Gen 30:9) are recorded. Both are always mentioned without ethnicity, either because they are both mothers of Jacob's promise-included children or perhaps because they both originate from Haran (cf. 29:24 and 29:29).¹⁰⁵

Yet ironically, the character Hagar, who in Genesis is the closest representation of the suffering exilic community and of Israel in Egyptian slavery, is excluded from being a role model for the Judean cause due to her ethnicity.¹⁰⁶ Or, does the text explicitly play with the

¹⁰³ Should this reference indicate that Abraham's wealth resulted from an imbursement by the Egyptians; see Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 284-285, 289. Or is it only a description stating that Abraham was very wealthy and the source is not explained; see Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 96.

¹⁰⁴ It is also not clear how much weight should be given to the name of Hagar (rgh – *hagar*), which is remarkably close to the words the stranger *ha-ger* (rgh). See also Pamela Tamarkin Reis, "Hagar Required," *JSOT* 87 (2000): 75-109, esp. 105 who argues for a 'possible pre-Exodus correspondence between Hagar and the Israelites.'

¹⁰⁵ Yiu-Wing Fung suggests that Zilpah and Bilhah are 'probably foreigners in light of their status as maids (hjp) (*shiphchah*). If he is right, then Jacob has two foreign wives who give him four sons and 19 grandchildren. 'Earlier attempts to avoid impurity in the lineage by the special arrangement of marriages (Abraham and Isaac) fail miserably in Jacob's family;' see Yiu-Wing Fung, *Victim and Victimizer*, 53.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion, and literature, of wilderness and exodus language in the Hagar cycle, see Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History in the Hagar Story," *JBL* 117, no. 1 (1998): 23-43. For a comparison of the literary characters of Hagar and Abraham and the 'death' of their sons in Genesis 16 and 17, and a comparison of Joseph and Ishmael, both 'being exiled and left to

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mistreatment motif of the Egyptian by the patriarch and matriarch of Israel? Hagar is primarily the victim of mistreatment; Ishmael to a lesser degree, and Sarah and Abraham are the guilty parties. In that situation, YHWH's ministry to the distressed Hagar is remarkable, because Sarah does not receive such an honour (YHWH talks only to her husband). Abraham and Sarah do not address Hagar by name, yet YHWH uses her personal name. Furthermore, she personally receives her own 'patriarchal' promise of greatly multiplied descendants (Gen 16:10). Thomas B. Dozeman even describes the nature of her expulsion (Gen 21:9-21) as 'salvific' and 'liberating,' based on the similarities between the narratives of Hagar and the other 'Egyptian,' Moses.¹⁰⁷ Yet in all of this it must be pointed out that both Sarah and Abraham sin greatly against Hagar and Ishmael.¹⁰⁸ The action of the national God of Israel is remarkable here and especially so when one considers the similarity between the experience of Hagar and that of the Israelites in Egyptian slavery. This teaches the diaspora and the nation that 'beyond ratifying that God has saved and will save; it also teaches that, as the Lord deals with his faithful, so does he deal with deserving non-believers.'¹⁰⁹

The struggle between Sarah and Hagar is all about their sons and, in the case of Ishmael and his descendants (Gen 16:12: 25:18), they neither live in Egypt nor in Canaan. Ishmael is included in YHWH's divine plan, though this does not include inheriting territory in Canaan but rather, the blessing of offspring and of becoming a great nation equal to that of Isaac. In conclusion, it can be said that Egypt in Genesis is (or was remembered for being) a land of blessing and survival, without conflict for those who encountered it. The narrator in Genesis does not pronounce any negative judgment on Egypt, though he might have hinted

roam with no home or family' (p. 239) and growing up in a foreign land where they 'nevertheless prospers under God's care' (p. 241), see S. Nikaido, "Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures: An Intertextual Study," *VT* 51, no. 2 (2001): 219-242.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Wilderness and Salvation History," 30-31.

¹⁰⁸ See Pamela Reis who in detail discusses the sins and shortcomings both of Sarah and Abraham; see Pamela Reis, "Hagar Required," 99.

¹⁰⁹ Pamela Reis, "Hagar Required," 106.

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at the intrinsic danger of empires, like Sarah being taken into the harem and Joseph's prophetic announcement about future oppression in Egypt. Egypt is generally regarded in a positive light, though this does not exclude the possibility that individual Egyptians are a source of conflict.

6.3.7.3. Conflict in Gerar?

Abraham's second encounter with a southern neighbour (here Gerar) notably follows the same racial and cultural stereotype as the first. Yet this time, the moral integrity of Abimelech, king of Gerar, receives the official and active acknowledgement of YHWH. This makes the contrast between Abraham and Abimelech and all his servants even greater. Abimelech is unique in that he is the only foreign king who enters into dialogue with YHWH. Abimelech's integrity is pronounced by YHWH (Gen 20:6) and he is presented as 'a just and God-fearing king deeply concerned for morality.'¹¹⁰ However, not only he but also all his servants, share Abimelech's concern and fear of the bad things that might befall them as a result of YHWH's anger. It is therefore very ironic that Abraham announces the reason for his action as, 'I did it because I thought, there is no fear of God at all in this place' (Gen 20:11). Abimelech continues to show integrity. After all Abraham and Sarah did to him, he allows them to settle wherever they want in Gerar (Gen 20:15) and lavishes them with gifts and also lets them keep the bride money (Gen 20:16).¹¹¹ Abraham's encounter with the people in Gerar is described as non-hostile and beneficial.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 72.

¹¹¹ For the same assessment, see Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, 408.

¹¹² See also Matthias Köckert, "Die Geschichte der Abrahamüberlieferung," in *Congress Volume: Leiden, 2004* (ed. André Lemaire; VTSup 109; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 103-128, esp. 125-126, who, in a very engaging article, notes that the fear of God also exists in a foreign land and that there are righteous people among them. Life is possible in the diaspora despite a number of difficulties, because God takes care of the diaspora.

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In all encounters with Abimelech, Gerar is portrayed as a small city, where the king and his commander of the army make non-aggression treaties with foreign herdsmen (Gen 21:22-32 and Gen 26:26-31) because they are afraid of them and their descendants.¹¹³ In the encounter with Isaac, Abimelech as ruler is able to warn *all* his people to stay away from Rebekah (Gen 26:11). Yet at the same time, the people feel threatened again by the presence of a foreign landowner/farmer and herdsman in the city of Gerar.

The description of Isaac's time in Gerar follows the general but abbreviated, plot of Abraham's time in Gerar (Gen 26:6-11, 16) with the same negative racial stereotypes employed by Isaac concerning the moral behaviour of the Philistines. This time, the patriarch's wife is not brought into the royal palace but the proof of the people's moral integrity is that Isaac and Rebekah have been 'there a long time' (Gen 26:8). The well-being of no one is negatively affected. The portrayal of the Philistines is not exclusively good. A peculiar verse describes them in an unusual action – 'the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells' that Abraham built (Gen 26:15). A mystery remains as to what good could come out of filling up wells with soil. Even the oft suggested envy-factor cannot explain these self-harming actions (esp. when there is a famine in a neighbouring country). Is envy not the recognition that a blessing has not reached oneself (cf. Rachel's envy of Leah, Gen 30:1)? Yet it is exactly this self-harming action of the Philistines who drive out the benefactors to society (e.g. Abraham and Isaac the well builders) that marks the conflicts with the Philistines as petty and narrow-minded.

¹¹³ This is very close to Arndt Meinhold's characteristic of a diaspora novella, namely 'L:' 'The reason for the hero's success is pronounced by the foreign nation, as they benefited from the hero's action' – the realisation that YHWH's presence is with the diaspora hero - cf. Gen 21:22 and 26:28. See Arndt Meinhold, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle I," 318.

6.3.7.4. Other Conflicts

One major conflict that is described in Genesis is the rebellion of the five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela against the four Babylonian-Elamite empires in Genesis 14. Yet this conflict does not affect Canaan at all and Abraham only gets involved when he needs to rescue his nephew Lot. Abraham rescues his nephew when he is in trouble, indicating a positive memory of a shared blood line with the ancestor of the Moabites and the Ammonites. Esau's choice in marrying one of Ishmael's daughters also points to the understanding of a shared blood line among all of Abraham's descendants. The origins of Ammon and Moab through incest between Lot and his daughters (Gen 19:30-38) marks these nations with an inferior colouring but the ancestor of Israel, who shares the same name, was a deceiver and stole his brother's blessing. Which case is worse? Frank Crüsemann describes Jacob's action rightfully as 'pure deception.'¹¹⁴ Lot's daughters also deceived their father, yet they at least could claim they acted in the interest of humankind as they thought they were the last survivors. Jacob, on his return from Laban, imagines a conflict with his brother Esau (Gen 32:1-21), only to find that 'Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him and they wept' (Gen 33:4).¹¹⁵ When Abraham died, Isaac and Ishmael both bury him at Mamre. Remarkably, there is no indication of any conflict or ill-feelings between Isaac and Ishmael, or should we say, between Ishmael and Abraham? Then there is also the mention of the Ishmaelite-Midianite merchants who buy and

¹¹⁴ Frank Crüsemann, "Human Solidarity and Ethnic Identity," 71.

¹¹⁵ For a similar assessment of the relationship between the brothers Esau and Jacob (and the wider implication of non-Israelite Yahwistic worship); see Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited," *JOT* 33, no. 22 (2008): 131-153. Typically, the character of Esau is interpreted as negative, because after Jacob's deceit Isaac withholds all blessings from him and curses him instead (Gen 27:38-40). However, the withholding of blessing by the human character Isaac does not indicate that YHWH follows the curse; rather, Esau is described as richly blessed to the degree that he refuses Jacob's lavish gifts because he has more than enough (Gen 33:9). He is also a remarkably peaceful character who does not hold any grudges against his brother the deceiver.

sell Joseph into Egypt but who only serve to explain how Joseph ended up in Egypt.¹¹⁶

6.3.7.5. Intermarriage in Genesis

The question of intermarriage is directly related to the question of conflict between different people groups. The primeval history establishes a shared bloodline in all humanity but also especially within the Semitic people.¹¹⁷ The most vocal opposition to cross-cultural intermarriage is voiced by Rebekah, who dislikes Hittite women (Gen 27:46). However, it is also possible that Rebekah's remark should be seen in light of the growing tensions between Esau and Jacob. Rebekah provides an excuse for Jacob to leave home with Isaac's permission and blessing (Gen 28:1-5). The negative fallout of this is that it prompts Esau to seek a further wife, one of Ishmael's daughters of the Abrahamic ancestral line (Gen 28:6-9). Esau's choice of marrying one of Ishmael's daughters points to the understanding of a shared blood line between Abraham's descendants. It is also in line with the positive attitude of marrying inside one's wider ethnic people group.¹¹⁸ Abraham also does not want a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanites (Gen 24:3) but he does not provide a logical explanation for this, except that he prefers the cultural pattern of his upbringing - endogamy (Gen 24:4). Yet, if the issue is about endogamy, then Abraham's comment is not about the

¹¹⁶ S. Nikaido argues that the Ishmaelites serve as an allusion to the wilderness rescue and subsequent prospering of Ishmael in Genesis 21. He concludes, 'it is a strange turn of fate that those who arrive to "save" Joseph are descendants of the same one who had earlier been targeted for such treacheries by the same family-but survived. The irony is vexing: if Ishmael had not survived his betrayal in the wilderness, Joseph may not have survived his.' See S. Nikaido, "Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures," 238.

¹¹⁷ See 5.4.3.2 on the issue of inclusiveness in Genesis 1-11.

¹¹⁸ See also Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 214; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 448; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 235.

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Canaanites *per se*; they are not acceptable simply because they are not Arameans.¹¹⁹

Genesis 24:3 is linked to passages like Exod 34:15-16 and Deut 7:1-3, that explicitly prohibit intermarriage with the Canaanites.¹²⁰ A few words link these three passages; they all share the words *jq̄l* (*laqach* – to take), *ʾb* (*ben* -son), *tb* (*bath* - daughter), which are too common to establish a linguistic link. All three passages oppose intermarriage with the Canaanites. Genesis 24:3 and Deut 7:1-3 explicitly name the Canaanites but Exods 34:15-16 generally refer to the inhabitants of the land. Yet Exod 34:16 and Deut 7:4 link the rejection to the worship of foreign deities, something that is alien to Abraham's request for an ethnic, endogamous marriage. That Laban's family is polytheistic is highlighted when Jacob, Leah and Rebekah return to Canaan with the stolen figures of Laban's household gods (Genesis 34).¹²¹ Therefore, it is better not to read an expression of deuteronomistic theology into Abraham's statement,¹²² especially in light of Sarah ending up in a Philistine and an Egyptian harem and Abraham producing offspring with his Egyptian maid Hagar and also with his other wife of unknown origin, Keturah. Genesis describes both Hagar and Keturah as wives of Abraham (Gen 16:3, 25:1) and concubines (Gen 25:6). This could indicate a difference in the legal and social status of the secondary wives but in the case of Jacob such a distinction among all four of his wives does not translate into a difference between his sons. Throughout Genesis the attitude of the male characters seems to be that women from a different ethnic background can be incorporated into one's own

¹¹⁹ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, 140, also highlights the idea that Abraham prefers endogamy but nevertheless insists that Isaac should not intermarry with the Canaanites because they are going to 'disinherit the land.'

¹²⁰ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 141. Wenham also lists Numbers 25 though it has nothing to do with the Canaanites but addresses intermarriage with a Midianite woman.

¹²¹ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, 140.

¹²² For the different source critical divisions of the chapter; see Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 138-139.

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clan.¹²³ This attitude is not limited to Genesis: Knoppers notes that in the Chronicler's genealogy of Judah (which is widely believed to originate in post-exilic Yehud) there are six cases of intermarriage between the line of Judah and a non-native (a Canaanite, an Ishmaelite, an Aramean, two Egyptians and a Moabite).¹²⁴

6.3.7.6. Conclusion

The inter-people group conflicts in Genesis are minimal in relation to all the host-societies of Canaan, Egypt, Philistia and Edom. Generally, the homeland is described as peaceful. Even so, there are violent conflicts on its borders, especially in relation to Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 14 and 19). Yet, surprisingly, there are no repeated intergenerational conflicts amongst the members of one nation. No nation throughout Genesis is described purely negatively. There are difficulties with individuals (for example, Shechem and Simeon and Levi) and between individuals, primarily Sarah and Hagar (though Abraham does not share the negative assessment of Hagar).

¹²³ The only other negative assessment of a cross-community "relationship" is the story of Dinah's rape at the hand of the prince of Shechem and the subsequent murder of all male citizens (though the woman and children are taken as bounty, Gen 34:29). The Hebrew Bible does testify to cross-cultural marriages between Israelite women and foreign men: Bathsheba married Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11:3). The mother of Hiram was from the tribe of Naphtali, his father was from Tyre (1 Kgs 7:13-14). Queen Esther married the Persian King Ahasuerus. Sheshan's daughter married an Egyptian slave (1 Chr 2:34-35).

¹²⁴ See Gary N. Knoppers' illuminating article in which he traces cases of intermarriage that are not condemned in the Hebrew Bible, see Gary N. Knoppers, "Intermarriage, Social Complexity, and Ethnic Diversity in the Genealogy of Judah," *JBL* 120, no. 1 (2001): 15-30, esp. 22.

6.3.8. A Sense of Empathy and Solidarity with co-ethnic Members in other Countries of Settlement

One of the interesting features of Genesis is that ethnicity does not play a substantial role. This is of course partially due to its location at the very beginning of human life (Genesis 1-11) and in the pre-nation existence of Israel (Genesis 12-50). The patriarchal narratives follow the struggle of Abraham's semi-nomadic descendants for survival through the land of Canaan. While every other people group seems to increase quickly in size and population, only with the patriarch Jacob does the nuclear family begin to move towards a substantial tribal size. This explains why ethnic identity markers do not play such a prominent role in Genesis. However, unique 'Jewish' boundary markers such as the Sabbath and circumcision are established at creation (Gen 2:1-3) or are divinely commanded for Abraham's descendants (Genesis 17).¹²⁵

Another feature is the clear preference for a shared ancestral relationship with the descendants of the family of Abraham (the line of Shem, Gen 11:10-26).¹²⁶ Abraham sends his servant to get a wife for Isaac from his own family line. The same is true for Jacob. The clearest example of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries is found, not surprisingly, in the diaspora novella of Joseph, where Joseph does everything possible to help his family back in Canaan. He provides food for them and ultimately arranges for them to move to the garden of Egypt with their families and their livestock in order to provide for them.

¹²⁵ For a discussion on the exilic prominence of these two concepts (the third being dietary laws which are not addressed in Genesis, except for Gen 32:32) see Nicolas Wyatt, "Symbols of Exile," *SEÅ* 55 (1990): 39-58. John Van Seters' redating of the Covenant Code also highlights the two exilic concepts of Sabbath and dietary laws; for a discussion see John Van Seters, *A Law Book for the Diaspora*, 162-171.

¹²⁶ Contra, F. V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map*, 37, who suggests that 'Egypt is then presented as a place that causes one to forget one's true roots and to assimilate, thus causing a confusion of the Hamitic and Shemitic lines.'

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There is also the case of Abraham's immediate action when he hears that his nephew Lot is taken captive in a foreign land (Gen 14). Abraham mobilises all his forces and rushes to rescue his nephew. While the separation between Abraham and Lot is attributed to their great wealth and the difficulties of settling together, the conflict is evidently not between Abraham and Lot. It is, and this is stressed by the narrator, a 'strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock' (Gen 13:7, cf. 13:8).

6.3.9. The Possibility of a Distinctive Creative, Enriching Life in Host Countries with a Tolerance for Pluralism

This anthropological characteristic originally aimed to prove that a diaspora existence is not life on the margins of society but that diaspora communities enhance their own culture by incorporating, modifying, reacting to and countering the prevailing host cultures' intellectual, religious and cultural influences. This view acknowledges that cultural cross-fertilisation is a natural part of diaspora existence. Genesis' interaction with cultural and religious concepts known from the wider ANE is well documented and does not need to be repeated here. This study understands Genesis to be a document influenced in its editing by a diaspora worldview and diaspora concerns. Whether or not one wants to follow Gmirkin's suggestion of a direct Babylonian influence on the primeval history,¹²⁷ there remains also the widely attested scholarly constructed exilic redactions of Genesis, which, together with the findings of this chapter, point to a creative re-interpretation of the *golah's* diaspora existence. This gives enough evidence to show that presence in a foreign land produced a creative re-interpretation and a corrective history over and against the prevailing Babylonian theologies. It can only be concluded that the diaspora indeed produced an enriched theological document – namely the book of Genesis. Two important (though later) exilic identity markers – namely, Sabbath and circumcision – also find key expressions in Genesis.

¹²⁷ For a discussion see 5.3.2. of this study.

6.4. Conclusion

In Genesis there is evidence of the majority (7 out of 9) of the diaspora characteristics. These are: i) Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions; ii) Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions; iii) A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements; iv) A regard of their ancestral homeland as their true ideal home and the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate; vi) A strong ethnic or religious group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate; viii) A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; ix) The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. However, some essential (or deemed to be essential) characteristics - the collective return movement (v) and the troubled relationship with the host societies (vii) - are not as clearly and strongly indicated as generally thought. They do lean towards a genuine diaspora notion of returning sometime in the future and living seemingly well and happily in a foreign land. Other characteristics, such as the diaspora's continuous mobility, go beyond expectations, as mobility is portrayed as a continuous facet of life. In relation to the modified characteristics, it may indicate that return and the troubled relationship with the host society are not universal ongoing characteristics of Judahite diaspora communities in antiquity, or at least, they were not of concern for the editors of Genesis at the time. Another important *golah* feature is the notion of not settling in the homeland as a recurring 'multi-generational' theme – all patriarchs (not only one) settle voluntarily abroad.

The book of Genesis contains much to suggest a diaspora mind-set and input. This input is especially prominent in Genesis 1-11. The idea of the earth being for global habitation, diaspora as a basic human condition, the repeated emphasis on and positive view of scattering to fill the earth, the absence of a prescribed homeland and the lack of an endorsement of linking one people group with a certain territory, all indicate the presence of motifs associated with diaspora living. The

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patriarchal narratives do not emphasise these characteristics as strongly. However, they also develop some diaspora motifs further, for example, the homeland, which, at least in theory, is established to be Canaan, though migration continues from it. The relationship between the patriarchs and foreign rulers and the relationship to other nations provides another example. The identity and boundary markers in Genesis are set in place (Sabbath, circumcision, intermarriage) but are not deemed to be essential. Sabbath is only mentioned as part of the creation order in Genesis 1. Circumcision is mandated in Genesis 17 (though it also applies to Ishmael) and has positive connotations, yet in the slaughter of Shechem (Genesis 34) circumcision as a boundary marker is abused. This contrasts with the attitude preserved in Ezra 9 regarding intermarriage and in Nehemiah 13 regarding the Sabbath. The multitude of diaspora concerns addressed throughout the book of Genesis indicates that both the primeval, and also the patriarchal, narratives address the diaspora situation, not only Genesis 1-11.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Rainer Albertz in his monumental work on the exilic period does not address the exilic origin of Genesis 1-11; see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile*.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

It has been claimed in scholarship that the Babylonian *golah* had a major impact on the biblical traditions of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Deutero-Isaiah, Ezra-Nehemiah and Genesis. The archaeological evidence of destruction and depopulation as a result of the Assyrian and especially Babylonian deportations in Israel and Judah provide evidence of the impact of the exilic period primarily on those who were deported. Archaeological findings relating to the wider Mesopotamian and Babylonian Judahite diaspora establish the impact of the deportation on the population but also witness to the preservative nature of diaspora living. The existing knowledge of Judahite diasporas, both in Elephantine and in Mesopotamia (and in the well-researched Greco-Roman period), cautions against labelling the diaspora either as syncretistic, assimilative, or xenophobic but calls instead for an assessment of diaspora communities in light of the diverse and developing Judaism of the Second Temple Period.

The trope of exile is widely recognised to have had an influence on the biblical texts, though its presentation is not as widespread or equally measured as its name suggests. This is seen in the presentation of exile/deportation of the territories of the Northern Kingdom/Samaria and Judah, who suffered a combined force of six deportations (733, 722, 701, 597, 587, 581), the de-population of vast areas of its territory and the redrawing of its international borders - and with it loss of territory and the concomitant loss of population of these annexed territories. Two things are surprising; first, the presentation of these deportations lacks any extensive descriptions of the trauma and pain associated with the displacement and dislocation and, secondly, the presentation highlights the possibility of a continuity of diaspora communities abroad, despite the deuteronomistic warning of the curse of annihilation in a foreign land.

The perspective of the Babylonian *golah* (and by analogy of other Judahite diaspora communities in antiquity) is assumed to be different from a Yehud-centred view. However, at this stage of the research it cannot be excluded that the prominence of return and restoration may be too

strongly influenced by a national (nation-state) ideology and these two ideas do not find their actual correspondence in the reality of the colonised people in Yehud or in the diaspora. More research would be welcome to help clarify the issues raised in relation to the Judahite diaspora and the question of whether or not this is also applicable to the people of Yehud. Fundamentally related to this question is the whole, so far undifferentiated, theology of exile and the issue as to what degree the language of exile and restoration is preserved in the Hebrew Bible.

The anthropological findings from the field of diaspora studies highlight that an actual physical return movement was not part of the diaspora mindset (sometimes the return is rather perpetually deferred). The diaspora, nevertheless, maintained a strong link to its homeland. This did not prompt return but rather an emotional tie to the original homeland as a homeland of imagination. The final restoration is presented as future, divine-initiated, and preceded by a religious transformation, especially in the exilic prophecies of Second Isaiah (Isa 40:3-5, 6-8, 10-11, 25-26; 55:12-13), where the prophet links the restoration return to a second exodus – including in its liberation *all* Israel and in linking it to divine revelation of true and heart-changing proportions.

Anthropological diaspora research points to a fundamental shift from exile to diaspora: the exilic mindset focuses on the trauma of exile and longs for return. The diaspora mindset of the second and third generations, who never physically knew their homeland, does not share the trauma and longing for the homeland of their parents. Yet they do not break the link to the ancestral homeland but are interested in holding together their diaspora existence in a ‘foreign’ land with a deep respect for the diverse traditions of their ancestral homeland and their ‘host’ nation (which is in reality their homeland). This study builds and reviews anthropological diaspora research in order to avoid the untheorised or undertheorised use of the concept of diaspora. In order to engage meaningfully with the biblical texts and the supposed influence of the Babylonian *golah*, the nature of a diaspora community, the relationship between homeland and host nation (or original homeland and homeland), and the experience of being a diaspora, must be taken into account.

The Babylonian *golah* community is made up of the second/third and following generations of Judahite deportees (both 597 and 587 BCE) in the wider Babylonian region. Their theological creed centred on their election as YHWH's true remnant, chosen to preserve genuine Yahwistic worship and belief and to enlighten their scattered fellow countrymen (as can be seen in Ezra-Nehemiah). It seems that the *golah* was not a homogenised group with one theology and worldview; rather, differing theological understandings and reformulations can be identified. Nevertheless, at the core of their theological understanding were issues of religious monotheism, spiritual inclusiveness, a non-political outlook and the belief in the global presence and accessibility of YHWH.

The influence of exile in the classical documentary hypothesis through the priestly source is the standard hypothesis guiding the interpretation of the biblical narratives. Recently some scholars, especially Christoph Levin and John Van Seters, have suggested that the Yahwist source best fits in the exilic period. To augment the discussion, this study investigates whether distinct diaspora characteristics are traceable in the book of Genesis. Both methods of inquiry, based on diaspora theology and based on the presence of diaspora characteristics, indicate that the book of Genesis was influenced by a redactor who shared the diaspora mindset. The interaction and familiarity with Babylonian, not just wider Mesopotamian myth, in the primeval history points to a creative reformulation and the editing of a corrective primeval history from the point of view of a member of the Babylonian *golah*. A comparison between Genesis and the presentation of the benevolent foreign rulers in the diaspora novellas further points to the influence of the *golah* on Genesis. Overall, the Babylonian *golah* presents itself as the source behind the outsider motif highlighted throughout the narratives in Genesis.

The motif of the empty land, though often associated with the *golah*, does not find its origin amongst the *golah* but rather is used in the wider ANE and biblical context. The *golah* does not view the year 538 BCE as the end of exile, nor do they think the return under Zerubbabel constitutes the new exodus. The *golah* in its primary function as a diaspora community understands both events as partially fulfilled and

awaits the complete fulfilment still to come. Pohlmann's *golah*-redaction of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel does not portray the Babylonian *golah* as the exclusively chosen community of exiled Judahites. The *golah* has only received prominence in Jeremiah 24 because of the undeserved divine mercy that was shown to this rebellious group. In some respects the Babylonian *golah* is a positive example of divine mercy for the scattered diaspora. The *golah* highlights that YHWH will remember his people. Nowhere in Ezekiel or Jeremiah does the 597 *golah* community receive a general *carte blanche* of election; YHWH's restorative purposes are always bound up with those inside the community who went through the necessary religious reform.

It has been assumed that exile and restoration are intrinsically linked. However, the research of Rom-Shiloni highlights the ambiguity regarding return as an intrinsic part of a theology of exile. It holds that utter destruction is the result of breaking the covenant: restoration, however, is rarely envisioned. Yet, in the course of the exile this theological position was altered and restoration to the land became prominent. This theological shift can best be associated with YHWH's special preservative election of the 597 *golah*, highlighted by the prophecy in Jeremiah 24. The nature of the restoration envisioned by the Babylonian *golah* was non-political for a number of reasons. The kings of Israel and Judah had failed their people, led them astray, and this resulted in a number of deportations. Therefore, the religious leaders did not favour a return under the authority of an earthly king. The Babylonian and Persian empire rewarded loyalty and punished dissent severely and this resulted in a pragmatic and non-political Babylonian *golah*.

The application of the modified diaspora characteristics to the text of Genesis indicates that a majority (seven out of nine) of the diaspora characteristics are to be found in Genesis. The lack of the return movement, which hitherto has been considered essential, and the troubled relationship with the host societies, both so far deemed essential, indicate a diaspora reality that agrees with the situation of the Judahite diaspora in the Persian period as part of the Persian multi-ethnic imperial state. The combination of the seven diaspora characteristics found

and the two unrealised characteristics reflects the known diaspora attitude of returning sometime in the future, while in the meantime, life is lived (with changing degrees of longing for return) in a foreign land. One question that needs to be addressed is how best to explain the presence of these diaspora characteristics in the text of Genesis. It is reasonable to suggest that the inclusion of these characteristics is a reflection of the diaspora worldview and mindset of the editor. Yet this study does not make any claims concerning the location of the editing, as further research needs to clarify whether the identified diaspora mindset can also have originated from the colonised situation in Yehud. The location of the editing in Yehud would then indicate that the responsible Yehudite community would recognise diaspora existence as an alternative to living in the land rather than inferior to it.

Genesis provides evidence of dispersions from the original centre to more than one foreign region (6.2.1.). At the same time, the narratives acknowledge that voluntary migration is the reason behind some of the dispersions (6.2.2.). Genesis focuses much on the homeland territory, yet it preserves a mythically blurred memory of Canaan (6.2.3.). At the same time Canaan is *the* homeland for the nation. Furthermore, the nation will return to it one day in the future, when the diaspora is aware that YHWH will lead them back in a second exodus (6.2.4.). Genesis also portrays, remarkably in light of the narratological focus on individuals who will one day become a nation, a strong ethnic group consciousness (6.2.6.) and sense of empathy and solidarity with its wider co-ethnic members (6.2.8.). The only clear dividing line between the chosen descendants of Abraham and the unchosen descendants (Lot, Esau) is that the latter voluntarily leave Canaan in order to settle in the surrounding territories and do not maintain a permanent link with Canaan.

Genesis, as a reflection of the diaspora mindset, indicates that a strong link to the homeland in Canaan exists but this is never developed into an explicit physical return movement; rather it remains an 'emotional' link and a project for the future (6.2.5.). The narratives in Genesis are not caught up in the struggle between a blurred mythical memory of the perfect homeland and contemporary troublesome struggles with their host societies. The general picture is one of morally superior

nations with a high degree of integrity, both outside the homeland and within. Moreover, struggle and conflicts based on an ethnic distinction are minimal in Genesis and are always limited to one generation rather than being passed on to the next generation (6.2.7.). Genesis points to a distinctly enriched life, at least on the level of theologizing in relation to the homeland, indicating toleration by its host society (6.2.9.). Overall, the Genesis narratives reflect diaspora characteristics that point to its having been influenced and edited by a diaspora mindset and that show evidence of a concern for other Judahite diaspora communities.

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Volker Glissmann is an Old Testament Biblical scholar and Theological Educator. He earned his PhD in Old Testament studies from Queen's University in Belfast and his MA in Theological Education from the London School of Theology. He has been in Malawi since 2010 serving as the Executive Director of TEEM (Theological Education by Extension in Malawi).

Exile and the disruption of the exilic period are prominent features in scholarly reconstructions of what influenced the shaping of biblical books and the development of theological thinking. The Babylonian golah community, as an exilic community, is credited by a growing number of scholars with influencing large parts of the Hebrew Bible. This study addresses the question whether the redactions show signs of an exilic mindset (first generation exiles) or are better understood as a reflection of a diaspora mindset (second/third and subsequent generations). This study also reviews all known archaeological diaspora findings from Mesopotamia in the pre-Hellenistic period (aided by insights from Elephantine) in order to build an as comprehensive as possible picture of Jewish diaspora life in Mesopotamia.



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